



# Teacher by Design, Not Accident! Partnering With Educators Rising to Prepare Tomorrow's Teachers, Today

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**Teacher by Design, Not Accident!**

Partnering with Educators Rising to Prepare Tomorrow's Teachers, Today

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)  
Capstone

Submitted by

Dwight E. Rhodes

To the Harvard Graduate School of Education  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education Leadership

April 2017

## **Dedication**

For Mom and Pop,

***Tinnie and Hughie Rhodes***

AND

My Partner,

***Micène Robert Fontaine***

## Acknowledgements

***“A noble person is mindful and thankful for the favors he receives from others.”***  
- Buddha

I am incredibly fortunate to have such an extensive network of amazing individuals in my life who supported me throughout the development of this Capstone. To each of you, I am forever grateful for your immense love and tireless support. I thank you!

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- Thank you for giving me space, during my residency and Capstone development, for exploring how we can build a reimagined pipeline of diverse and accomplished teachers for all students regardless of geography.



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## Abstract

As of spring 2017, more than 50 million students attend public schools in the United States. However, the number of new college enrollees who desire to enter education as a profession is at its lowest level in nearly 50 years. According to data gathered by UCLA's Cooperative Institutional Research Program, as of 2016, barely 4% of college freshman plan to pursue education as a major, which is down from nearly 12% just a few decades ago (Flannery, 2016). The percentage of Black teachers is even lower. A recent study by the Department of Education entitled, "The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce," shows there is a significant gap, by race, in the desire to go into teaching. Although nearly 50% of elementary and secondary students are of color, less than one in five U.S. public school teachers are individuals of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The reality of a lower percentage of Blacks in teaching is a complex issue because the decreased presence of Black teachers occurs at different points along the teacher career pipeline.

Adding to the teacher shortage is the reality that many new teachers' dissatisfaction leads them to leave the profession within a few years. According to the Education Commission of the States, lowering teacher attrition and increasing teacher supply and quality in high-need areas like special education, math, science, and underserved schools are two ways to address specific teacher shortages (Woods, 2016). Additionally, research suggests that enhanced preparation and mentoring programs can have a positive impact on increasing the number of teachers and lowering teacher attrition (Scriber & Akiba, 2010).

In an effort to reverse the declining numbers of well-qualified aspiring educators entering the teaching profession, Educators Rising, a rebranding of the organization formerly called Future Educators of America, is innovatively re-imagining ways to support the development of sustainable teacher pipelines to effectively prepare aspiring educators for rewarding, long-term careers in education.

This capstone focuses on the following three initiatives: 1) the creation of a co-curricular, school-based career pathway program (EdRising Academy Curriculum) to support diversity in Grow-Your-Own aspiring teacher programs for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in local communities; 2) the development of assessments (Educators Rising's "Aspiring to Teach" micro-credentials) for students to demonstrate fundamental teaching skills in five discrete areas; and 3) the implications of that work for the larger teacher-preparation sector, as well as for the site, and for myself.

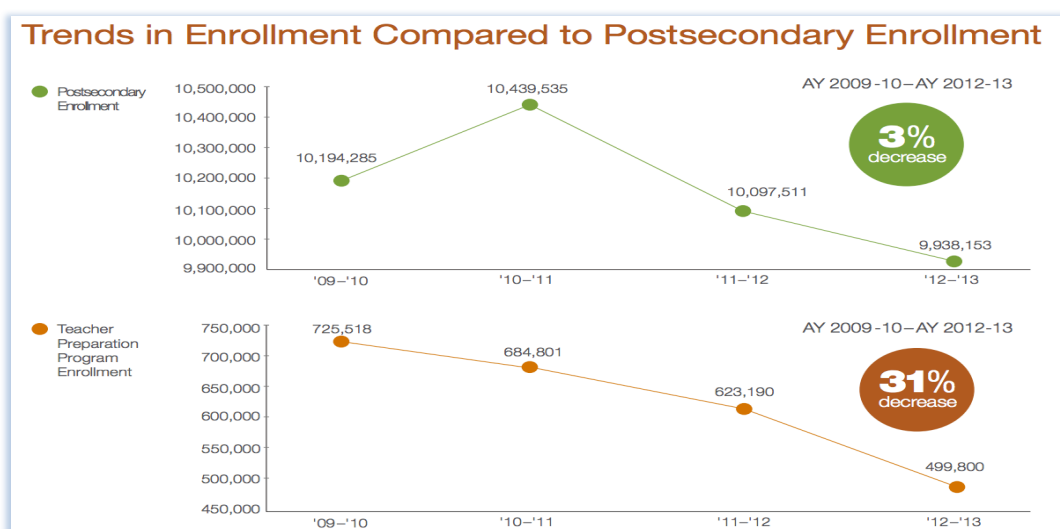
## Introduction

***“We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens this community—and this nation.”***

**– Cesar Chavez**

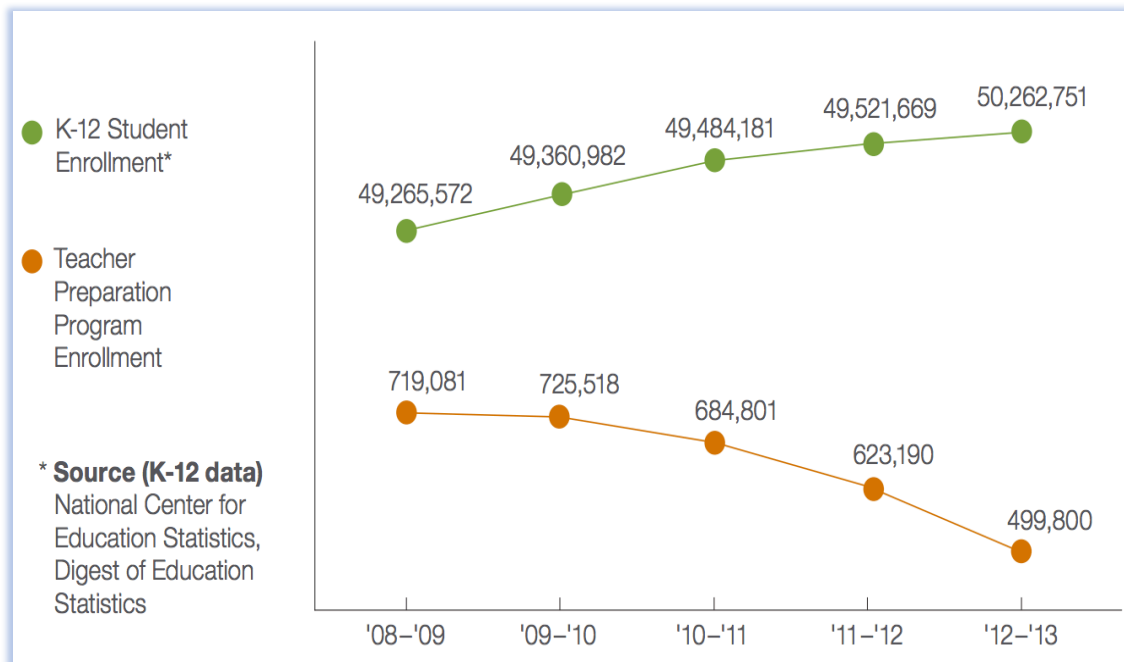
The number of new college enrollees who desire to go into education is at its lowest level in nearly 50 years. According to data gathered by UCLA’s Cooperative Institutional Research Program, as of 2016, barely 4% of college freshmen plan to pursue education as a major, which is down from nearly 12% just a few decades ago (Flannery, 2016). As of 2016, an overwhelming majority of students who become public school teachers are White. However, the majority of students in public schools are students of color. As illustrated by the chart below, enrollment into teacher preparation programs (traditional, alternative Institutions of Higher Education-based, and alternative non-Institution of Higher Education-based) has dropped 31%, a steep decline in comparison to overall postsecondary enrollment, which has dropped by only 3%. Although teacher preparation program enrollment has declined, K-12 student enrollment has seen a steady increase (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

**Figure 1. Postsecondary Enrollment vs. Teacher Preparation Enrollment**



Caption from U.S Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education  
[https://title2.ed.gov/Public/44077\\_Title\\_II\\_Issue\\_Brief\\_Enrollment.pdf](https://title2.ed.gov/Public/44077_Title_II_Issue_Brief_Enrollment.pdf)

*Figure 2. K-12 Enrollment vs. Teacher Preparation Program Enrollment*

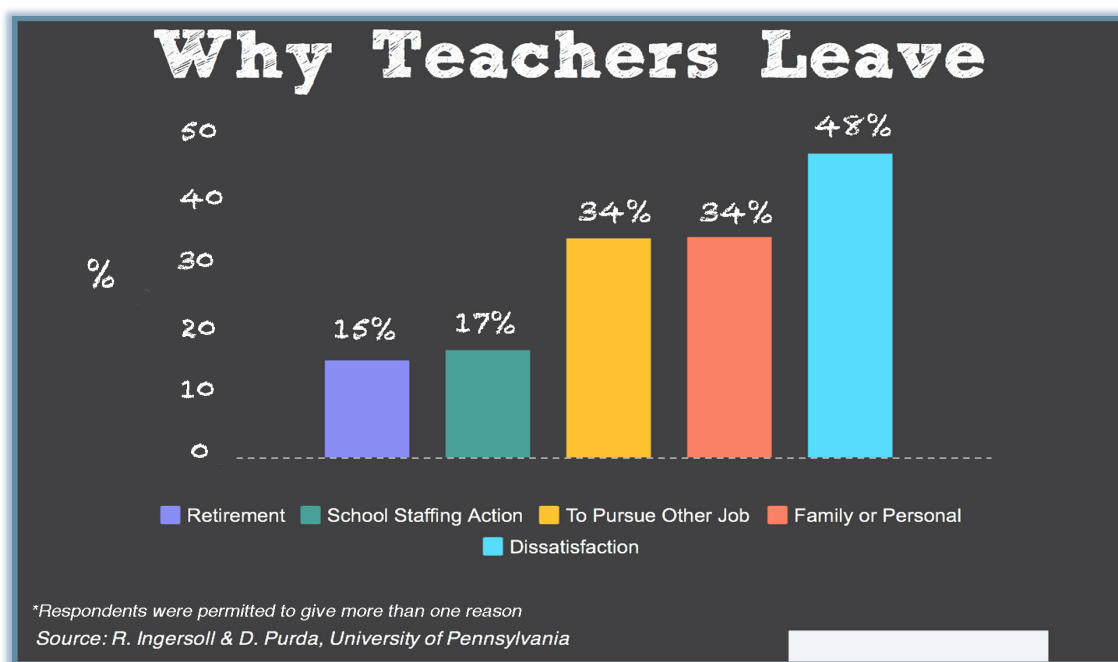


Caption from U.S Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education  
[https://title2.ed.gov/Public/44077\\_Title\\_II\\_Issue\\_Brief\\_Enrollment.pdf](https://title2.ed.gov/Public/44077_Title_II_Issue_Brief_Enrollment.pdf)

The U.S. Department of Education predicts K-12 enrollment will increase by at least 5.2%, which will add roughly 2.5 million more students to the 50 million currently enrolled our public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). New teachers are not being prepared quickly enough to keep up with ever-increasing student enrollment.

Two contributors to high teacher-attrition rates are a pervasive pattern of job dissatisfaction, especially in large urban areas, and the reality that scores of baby boomers are retiring (Flannery, 2016). Job dissatisfaction was the largest contributing factor for teachers leaving the field of education (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Reasons Why Teachers Leave Teaching Careers



Caption from NEA Article Want to Reduce the Teacher Shortage? Treat Teachers Like Professionals  
<http://neatoday.org/2015/08/26/want-to-reduce-the-teacher-shortage-treat-teachers-like-professionals/>

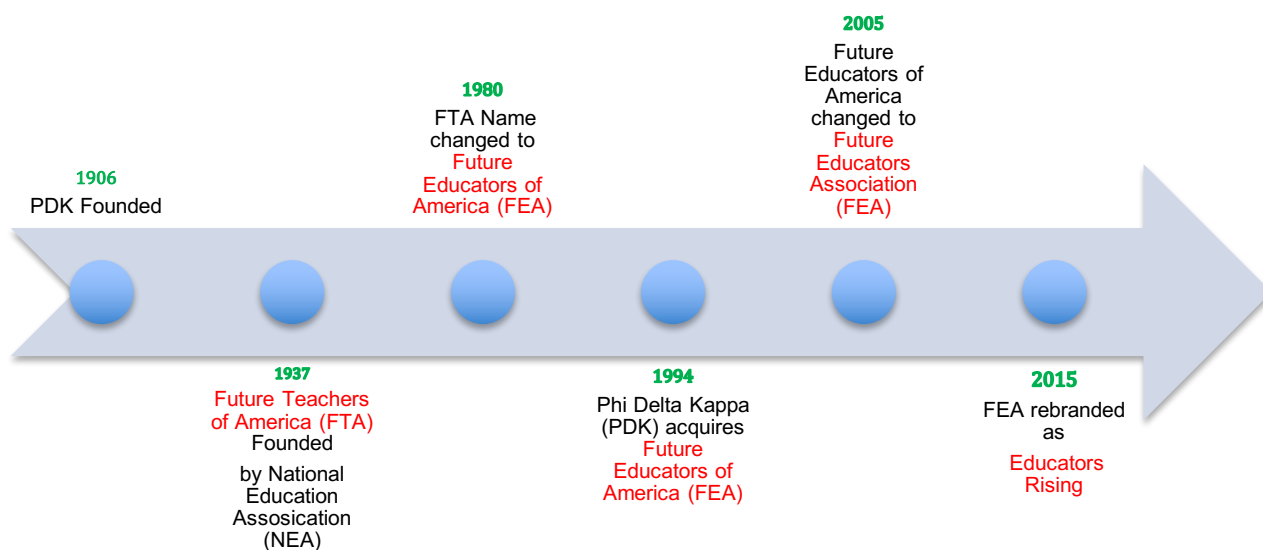
Educators Rising, a rebranding of the organization formerly called Future Educators of America, seeks to halt that precipitous drop by demonstrating the philosophy espoused in Deborah Ball's Teaching Works organization that “Great teachers aren’t born; they are taught” (Teaching Works, 2016). Educators Rising is re-imagining ways to support the development of sustainable teacher pathways to prepare aspiring educators effectively for a rewarding long-term career in education.

### **Educators Rising: Origin Story**

Founded in 1906 as one of the first professional educational organizations, Phi Delta Kappa International (PDK) had a goal of elevating the status of education in America. Over the past several decades, PDK launched several initiatives to support that goal. One of those initiatives was taking over the sponsorship of Future Educators of America. Future Educators of America was started by National Educators Association

(NEA), as Future Teachers of America (FTA) in 1937. Later, NEA renamed FTA to Future Educators of America (FEA). See Figure 4 below for visual timeline. The aim of Future Educators of America (FEA) was to support and guide middle and high school students who expressed interest in becoming a teacher. Over time, FEA focused on high school and college students and NEA dropped the high school part but kept the college component, which is currently known as the NEA Student Program. In 2005, Future Educators of America was renamed Future Educators Association to reflect the international awareness of its parent organization, PDK. Ten years later, co-directors Dan Brown and Ashley Kinkaid launched Educators Rising. Educators Rising evolved from Future Educators Association.

*Figure 4. Phi Delta Kappa and Educators Rising Timeline*



When Future Educators Association became Educators Rising in the fall of 2015, it carried over approximately 14,000 members to the new organization. Of those, 13,000 were high school students located in more than 770 different chapters around the

country. Since then, the organization has successfully recruited more than 800 members per month. As of early March 2017, Educators Rising membership has swelled to over 29 thousand active members (students and teacher leaders) in 50 states, with official affiliates in 17 states and 2 regions. More than 50% of those members are students of color. By comparison, only 20% of U.S. public school teachers are people of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The rebranding process reflected a 21<sup>st</sup>-century cultural awareness (“FEA” in Spanish means ugly), as well as a modern recognition of teenage, aspiring educators’ (primarily 11th and 12th graders) impact in the present; they are taking their first steps on the long professional continuum and are already having an impact today, not just in the future. Educators Rising’s official mission says it “cultivates highly skilled educators by guiding young people on a path to becoming accomplished teachers, beginning in high school and extending through college and into the profession” (Educators Rising, 2016).

### **Educators Rising: Adding Innovation and Coherence to Teacher Preparation**

Many different teacher preparation programs exist within the U.S. Some are more effective than others. According to a quantitative research study of U.S. programs by Goldhaber and Cowan (2014), “there is substantially more variation in teacher effectiveness within programs than across them” (p. 459). At the secondary level, there are few national programs utilizing the untapped resources of talented 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders to develop a more effective and sustainable teacher preparation pipeline.

Educators Rising will utilize its ever-increasing high school membership, which spans the entire U.S., to broaden and diversify the teacher talent pool as well as to

empower local communities to “grow their own” teachers to fill specialized teacher shortages in areas like special education, math, science, and underserved schools. By providing hands-on teaching experiences, Educators Rising offers benefits for both students and the field at large. Results from a study by the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (2007) strongly suggest that when high school students take classes that are based on real-world career choices, they are much more likely to remain academically engaged and intrinsically motivated with aspirations to finish high school and college, and transition into a rewarding career because they are given “the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills from their academic lessons directly to real-world situations” (p. 8). By demonstrating their newly acquired skills with the Educators Rising micro-credentials, students receive that opportunity.

In a 2016 speech, former Secretary of Education John King called for “strengthening teacher preparation so that it is grounded in the real-world challenges of the classroom” (King, 2016). Early exposure can provide a valuable running start into postsecondary education that enables a student to pursue teaching or make an informed choice to opt out before the loss of the sunk cost of selecting a major that ultimately is not the right fit for them.

Believing in its slogan, “There's Power in Teaching,” one of Educators Rising's most audacious goals is to chart a clear course of action for diverse, intellectually talented, and altruistically impassioned high school students to authentically test-drive teaching as a career option and take their first steps on a coherent path to accomplished practice. This pathway will consist of Educators Rising's newly developed Grow-Your-Own EdRising Academy Curriculum (including clinical experiences), and



“Aspiring Educators” micro-credentials. Micro-credentials, also referred to as badges, are becoming valid and reliable performance-based assessments that can be an opportunity for students to engage in not only building skills, but highlighting mastery in those skills. Micro-credentials allow students to capture what they know and demonstrate it. Educators Rising’s role will be that of an association or Career and Technical Student Organization that integrates into existing curricula, which will expand into offering districts and schools the premium, soup-to-nuts training/curriculum/assessment program.

To develop its curriculum and micro-credentials, Educators Rising convened a committee of practitioners that used the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards’ (NBPTS) process and protocol for standards development to back-map what the committee of practitioners felt was the best knowledge about teaching. Ultimately, Educators Rising seeks to link to larger efforts, such as NBPTS, edTPA (formerly the Teacher Performance Assessment), and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) in seeking to support a teaching workforce development strategy that is parallel to other successful career pathway programs. For example, with nearly 650,000 student members, the Future Farmers of America pathway program has created and sustained a strong workforce strategy into agriculture science. Educators Rising wants to leverage its ever-expanding student membership to have a similar workforce impact on preparing teaching.

My residency project addressed the ways in which teacher candidates are attracted to the profession and mentored at the secondary level. In light of Educators Rising’s important and audacious goal, I asked myself the following question: How can I

support Educators Rising, which is my residency placement, in its efforts to put talented high school students, especially those of color, on a path to high school completion and college degree attainment, and then successfully transition them, via a sustainable teacher pipeline, into the teaching profession to grow the next generation of highly skilled and diverse educators? I used my review of knowledge for action to guide me.

## Review of Knowledge for Action

***“You have to ignore it when a child says, ‘I don’t want to,’ because what they’re really saying is, ‘I don’t think I can and I need you to believe in me until I can believe in myself.’”***

***– Shanna Peeples, 2015 CCSSO National Teacher of the Year***

This Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA) explores the nexus of teacher quality and quantity through the lens of teacher recruitment and attrition, considering the current lack of teacher diversity and the potential for an innovative teacher pathway to provide equitable learning environments for all students. My RKA research question is, “How should Educators Rising, a reimagined organization for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders aspiring to be teachers, leverage its extensive and growing diverse membership to put more aspiring teachers on a path to effective teaching?”

### **The Problem**

In addition to the steep decrease in college students intending to teach, those who are interested in becoming teachers often are not from the top tier of their class. Decreased enrollment in teacher preparation programs and the skill level of those entering the field are critical challenges because majoring in education has historically been the precursor to becoming a teacher. According to a recent ACT report (2016), “Not only are fewer students interested in becoming an educator, but those who are interested have lower-than-average achievement levels in three of the four subject areas,” (p. 3). This strongly suggests there is a problem not only with the number of candidates who seek education as a career path in certain high-needs areas like Special Education, Math, and Science, but there also is an ominous reality that the quality of those seeking the field is greatly diminished when “only 23% of entering

teachers come from the top third of their graduating class and just 14% of new teachers who come from the top third work in high-poverty schools" (Auguste, Kihn, & Miller, 2010, para. 3). According to a 2016 report from the National Council on Teacher Quality (2016a), the most effective teaching training programs must have the "foundation on which methods courses, professorial quality, assignments, opportunities to practice teaching, and other course requirements all rest. If a program fails at these fundamentals, even excellence in the other areas will not sufficiently prepare teachers for their classrooms" (p. 9). As of 2016, only three states (Rhode Island, Utah, and West Virginia) limit admissions to the top half of college-bound students (p. 5). This report is the first of six over the next two years that the National Council on Teacher Quality will generate to explore the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs.

### ***Teacher Preparation and Quality***

The effectiveness of teachers, or lack thereof, has been associated with poor student learning outcomes for decades. In response to challenges in both quality and quantity, a cornucopia of teacher training programs has sprouted up across the country, creating a wide range of entry points for teaching careers. With the proliferation of alternative preparation programs and the negative perceptions of many traditional teacher education programs, policy debates about teacher quality and teacher preparation programs have become polarizing. Walsh and Jacobs (2007) point out that that even as far back as the 1980s, major news publications like *Newsweek* have criticized teacher quality, saying, "Teacher training is perhaps the biggest running joke in higher education" (p. 16). A study by Arthur Levine (2006), showed that 62% of new teachers reported that they graduated from their preparation program unprepared for the classroom.

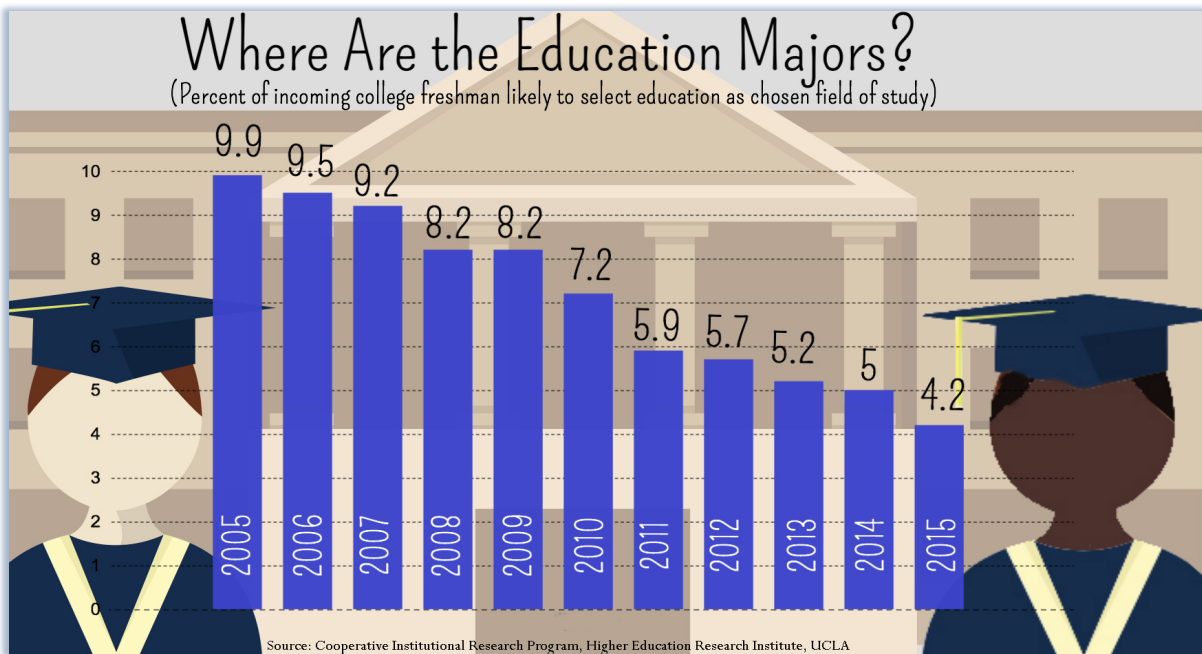
Some would attribute this reality to the knee-jerk reaction to national legislatively backed reform efforts like the now infamous No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was the reauthorization of the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The former was fueled by the scathing education report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* released during the Reagan Administration in the 1980s. With the release of this report, the nation was stirred into action. Everyone from educators to legislators jumped on a nationwide movement to reform our educational system from federal, state, and local levels (“Nation”, n.d.).

The *A Nation at Risk* report was clear: If schools were failing, or at least that was the prevailing thought, a villain needed to be identified. The culprit quickly became the millions of educators teaching in classrooms across the country. Schools were considered failing because of the poor training received by their teachers. Walsh and Jacobs (2007) described a 1970s effort to improve teacher training, saying many “states had intentionally narrowed the path to the classroom to ensure entry only to professionally trained individuals” (p. 16). After the publishing of *A Nation at Risk* and resulting legislative reform efforts, many of the same states that tried to limit the entry routes for transitioning into the teaching field began to undergo major teacher shortages. Those states, faced with these growing teacher shortages, “handed out emergency credentials to clearly unqualified people when the education schools couldn’t meet the demand for new teachers” (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007, p. 16).

### ***A Teacher Shortage?***

Although results from a widely cited study from nearly 15 years ago showed approximately half of the nation's new teachers leave the profession within five years of entering the teaching field (Ingersoll, 2003), a more recent study suggests national teacher turnover rates are closer to 17% (Gray & Taie, 2015). Of the ones who do go into the profession, many leave soon. As shown in the chart below, there are not enough qualified candidates to fill high-need areas (Figure 5).

*Figure 5. Percentage of Freshman Who Want to Go into Teaching*

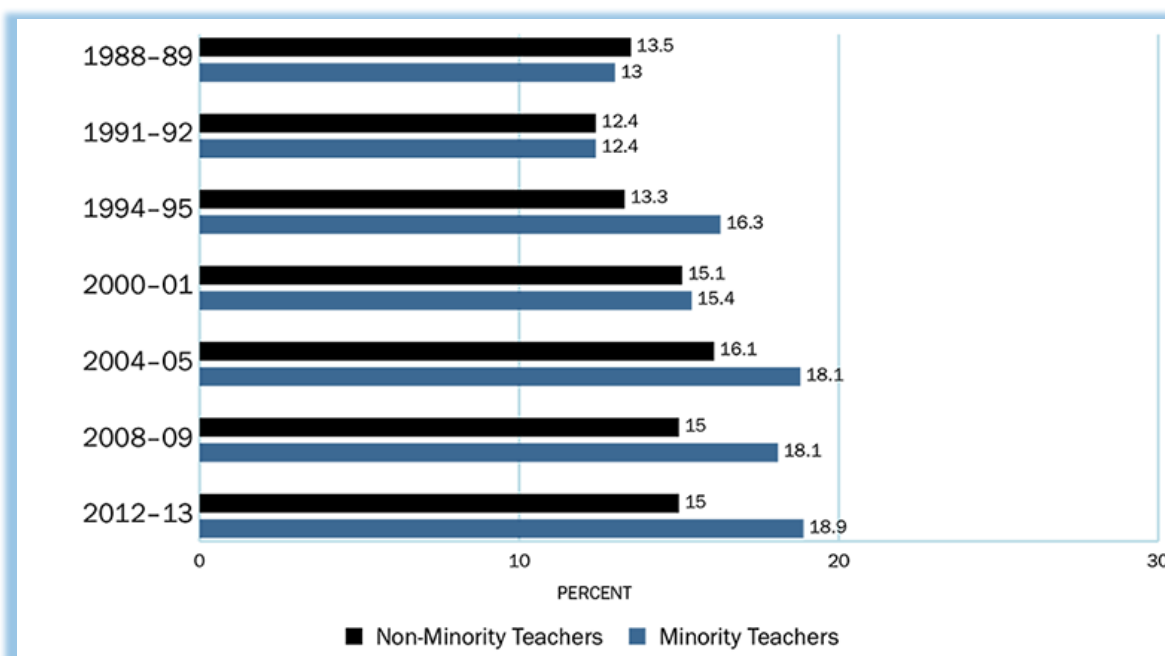


Caption from NEA Article "Number of Future Teachers Reaches All-Time Low"  
<http://neatoday.org/2016/03/15/future-teachers-at-all-time-low/>

Tension exists over why there is contradictory data about national teacher turnover. My research revealed a host of reasons; however, the prevailing school of thought is that the state of the economy heavily influenced statistics. For example, the 2003 Ingersoll study, which showed a 50% teacher turnover rate, used data when the economy was strong and more job opportunities outside of education were available.

This wooed teachers into leaving education for higher paying and less stressful positions; thus, a higher turnover rate. Regardless of the exact rate, attrition is a significant problem, as even the lowest estimate suggests a close to 20% turnover within five years. As a 2016 report from Learning First Alliance illustrated, attrition rates are even higher for teachers of color at “high-poverty and high minority” schools (Sack-  
Min, 2016, p. 6) (Figure 6).

*Figure 6. Percent Annual Public School Teacher Turnover, by Race/Ethnicity of Teacher*



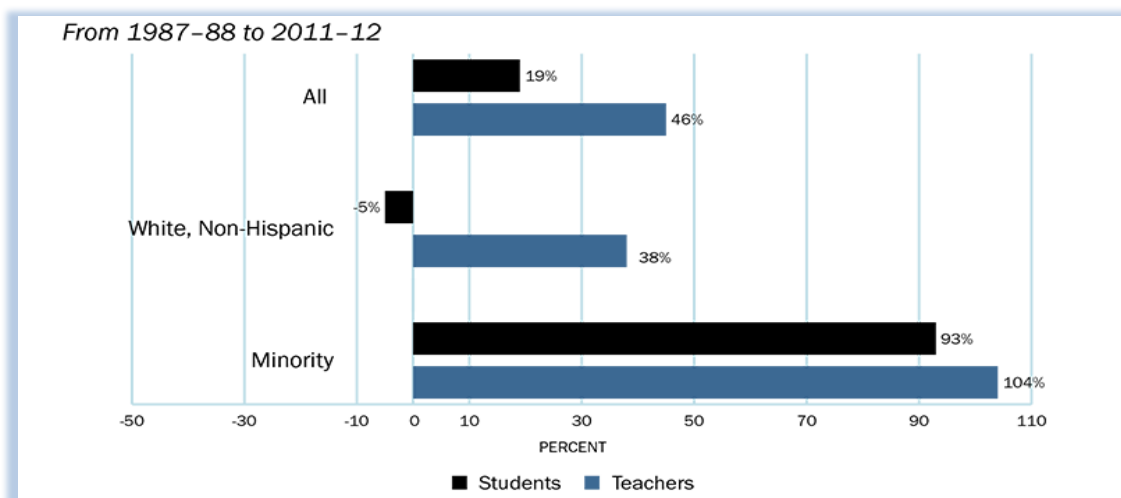
Caption from the Learning Policy Institute Article, “Minority Teacher Recruitment, Employment, and Retention: 1987-2013” by Richard M. Ingersoll, Henry May <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/minority-teacher-recruitment-brief>

Notwithstanding the ongoing debate about the percentage of teacher attrition, immediate actions are needed to attract, train, support, and retain a more diverse teacher workforce, regardless of a future upturn or downturn in the economy.

The U.S. K-12 public school teaching workforce is overwhelmingly homogenous. As of 2016, out of over 3.2 million public school K-12 teachers, 82% are White, and only 2% are Black males (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In a Johns Hopkins

University study (2015), Gershenson, Stephen, and Papageorge found “that nonblack teachers of black students have significantly lower expectations than do black teachers” (p. 3). The negative impact was larger for Black male students. Half of the 50 million students in public schools are students of color. As Figure 7 illustrates, the reality is that the number of White students in public schools has decreased, while the number of non-White, especially Hispanic students, has undergone a steady increase over the past nearly three decades. See Figure 8 for mismatch between teachers and students.

*Figure 7. Percent Change in Students and Teachers by Race/Ethnicity*



Caption from the Learning Policy Institute Article, “Minority Teacher Recruitment, Employment, and Retention: 1987-2013” by Richard M. Ingersoll, Henry May <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/minority-teacher-recruitment-brief>

*Figure 8. Mismatch between Public School Teachers and Students, 2011-2012*

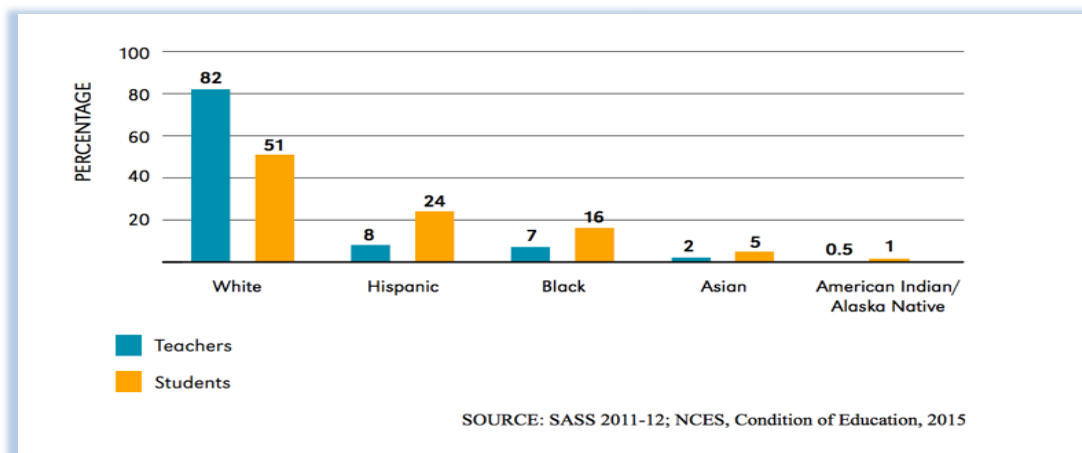


Chart from [http://www.learningfirst.org/sites/learningfirst/files/LFA-educator-shortage-V5%20\(2\)%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.learningfirst.org/sites/learningfirst/files/LFA-educator-shortage-V5%20(2)%20(1).pdf)

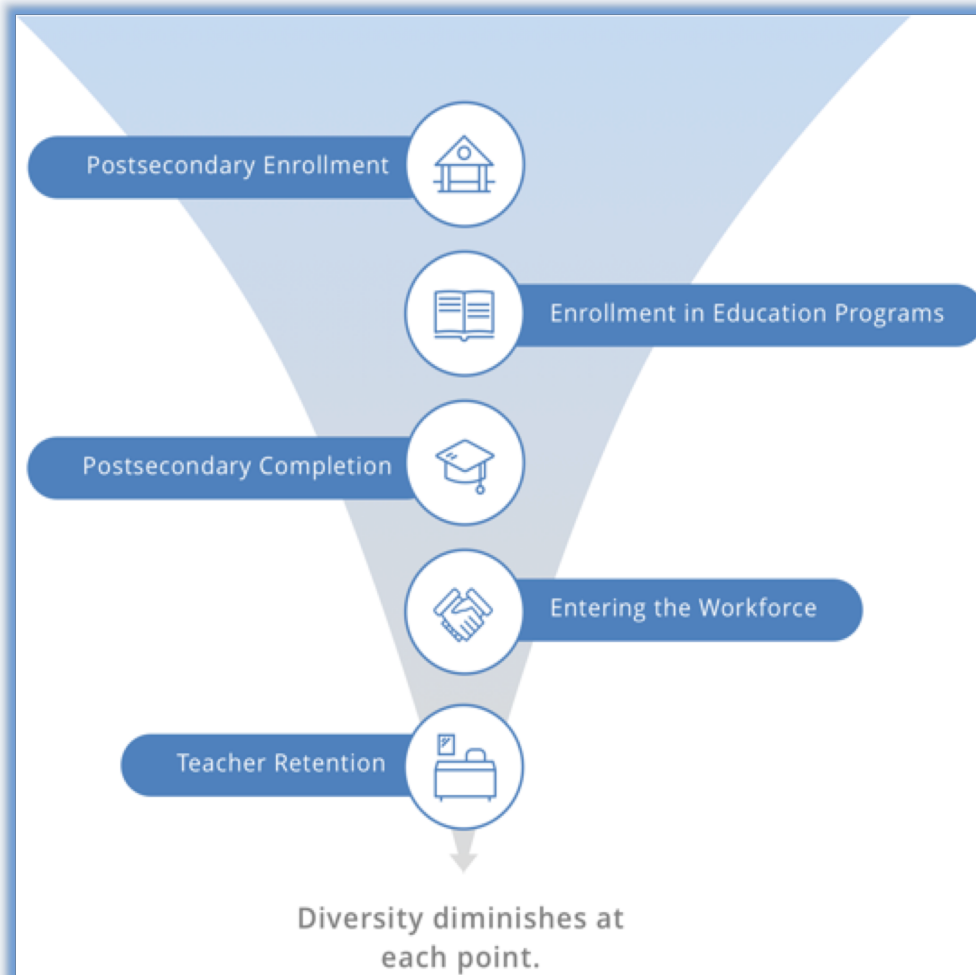


This is significant because there are far too many students, especially those of color, who are not reaching their full potential. Yet, research indicates that the teachers facilitating students' learning can have a significant impact on their learning based upon what the teacher believes and how well they have been trained (Gershenson, Stephen, & Papageorge, 2016).

Unfortunately, the persistent gap between the percentage of minority students and the percentage of minority teachers in the U.S. public school system continues to widen. However, the root of the problem is not just recruiting teachers of color; rather, it also involves the retaining of these teachers once they have decided to enter the profession. Current research illustrates that recruitment efforts have actually increased the number of Black teachers in public education. According to a study from the Learning Policy Institute, "Since the late 1980s, the number of elementary and secondary teachers has dramatically increased. This is especially true for minority teachers, whose numbers more than doubled from about 325,000 to 666,000 by 2012," (Ingersoll & May, 2016, para. 6). Although the number of teachers of color has increased, a huge gap still exists because gaps in diversity occur at different points along the teacher pipeline process. Karen DeAngelis, an associate dean at the University of Rochester's Warner School of Education, found that "New research indicates the [teacher] pipeline has leaks at almost every stage—from high school, through college graduation and job retention" (Dawson, 2016, para. 1). Figure 9 below illustrates where the different points of decreased minority participation can be found at postsecondary enrollment, enrollment in education programs, postsecondary

completion, entering the workforce, and teacher retention points along the pathway of being an educator.

*Figure 9. Points of Decline in Minority Enrollment along Teacher Preparation Pipeline*



Caption from the Department of Education, "The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce" 2016  
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf>

When those five areas of leaks in the teacher pipeline are analyzed, longitudinal research conducted by the Learning Policy Institute shows that the most significant decrease occurs within the area of teacher retention. To illustrate this point, national data show that one school year witnessed the influx of over 47,000 teachers of color; but, by the end of that school year, more than 56,000, roughly 20% more, decided to transition out of teaching (Ingersoll & May, 2016). According to Dr. Sharon Robinson,

president and CEO of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, “Retention of the existing teacher workforce is a strategic point of intervention that must be part of the shortage solution” (Sack-Min, 2016, p. 1). According to research conducted by the Education Commission of the States, lowering teacher attrition and increasing teacher supply and quality in high-need areas like special education, math, science, particularly at underserved schools, are two important ways to address specific teacher shortages (Woods, 2016). A growing number of educators return to teach near where they once lived, which supports developing effective teachers through grow-your-own initiatives. Without effective recruitment, training, and support of teachers. For states to succeed in their efforts to raise the bar on student achievement, there must be clear pathway structures to incentivize the most talented and committed students to become teachers, particularly those of color.

## **Potential Solutions**

### ***Grow-Your-Own***

Why recruit aspiring teachers from high school students? Grow-Your-Own teacher preparation programs (also known as GYO) grew out of the need for more local teachers. “Locally grown” teachers know local contexts and the students in them. According to a research study out of Stanford University by Michelle Reininger (2011), “Over 60% of teachers teach within 20 miles of the high school from which they graduated” (p. 4). A report by Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, and Darling-Hammond (2016) recommended that in order to attract and retain excellent educators, we need to “create local pathways into the profession, such as high school career pathways and Grow-Your-Own teacher preparation models” (p. viii). With the passage of the Every Student

Succeeds Act (ESSA), this is an ideal time for states to leverage the reality that a large population of teachers eventually teach close to where they attended high school.

Many communities across the United States rely upon teachers who are from the area. However, there is scarce evidence that these communities are effectively tapping into their own natural resources to recruit and mentor potentially powerful educators, especially people of color, from their backyards. For example, in Illinois, Karen DeAngelis found that “there are more than enough students of color to become teachers—if they have the necessary supports, and if they want to,” (Dawson, 2016, para. 5). In fact, when the state of Illinois studied the impact of its Grow-Your-Own initiatives in local communities, it also found that GYO teachers have the potential to improve the state’s diversity by attracting teachers who reflect the culture of their local communities and that GYO teachers are much more likely to stay in the schools since they are products of those communities (Hunt, Haller, Hood, & Hesbol 2012). An evaluation of teacher effectiveness in Illinois, Hunt, Gardner, Hood, & Haller (2010), concluded:

The program [GYO] is characterized as “a pipeline of highly effective teachers of color” in an evaluation that found GYO teachers “enter the classroom ‘ready to teach’ and exhibit positive and effective behaviors that are likely to result in increased student achievement” (p. 2).

Mentoring and supporting teachers, especially novice teachers, are also proving to be strong tools for improving how teachers feel about their work (Woods, 2016). According to a report by the National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future (2016), a recent study “found that first year teachers who had entered the profession with strong pedagogical training were twice as likely to stay beyond their first year than their peers who received less intensive training” (p. 12). Those who are serious about

teacher training should be paying attention to those programs that offer opportunities to practice improving their practice with an expert practitioner. Researchers Guha and Kini (2016) found that a teacher residency is an essential component of a quality teacher preparation program, which incorporates the following:

1. Strong district/university partnerships
2. Coursework tightly integrated with clinical practice
3. Full-year residency teaching alongside an expert mentor teacher
4. High-ability, diverse candidates recruited to meet specific district hiring needs, typically in fields where there are shortages
5. Financial support for residents in exchange for a three- to four-year teaching commitment
6. Cohorts of residents placed in “teaching schools” that model good practices with diverse learners and are designed to help novices learn to teach
7. Expert mentor teachers who co-teach with residents
8. Ongoing mentoring and support for graduates (p. 1).

Through the support of local institutions (for example, community colleges, universities, school districts, public charter school operators, and faith-based organizations), Educators Rising can support the recruitment, training, and development of future educators by providing them with national resources for engagement with the students as well as the entire community in which the student lives.

### ***Micro-credentials***

By attracting aspiring educators on an earlier pathway into teaching, like utilizing the Grow-Your-Own EdRising Academy curriculum and micro-credentials, implementers of these tools can have a direct impact on whether or not rising educators feel better prepared to transition into teaching and remain there longer. Micro-credentials allow students to capture what they know and demonstrate it. In 2011, former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan described micro-credentials as a way to “speed the shift from credentials that simply measure seat time, to ones that more accurately measure

competency. We must accelerate that transition. And, badges can help account for formal and informal learning in a variety of settings.” (Duncan, para.12).

According to the Friday Institute of Educational Innovation (Acree, 2016), “Micro-credentials enable professional learning providers to see the connections teachers made to their own practice by asking teachers to submit artifacts that demonstrate how they have integrated the practice into their classrooms” (p.3). Growing more popular and assessable along the educator landscape, micro-credentials allow aspiring educators to receive public recognition of skills they earned at the secondary level. According to a study on the effectiveness of micro-credentials, they are self-paced and engaging opportunities for students to personalize their own learning needs in ways that are motivating for them, which can lead to increased engagement and possibilities of success (Abramovich, Schun, & Higashi, 2013). Effective preparation programs can have a positive impact on increasing the number of teachers and lowering teacher attrition (Scribner & Akiba, 2010).

### **Theory of Action**

My Theory of Action was as follows:

**If** I assist Educators Rising by

leading the convening of a committee of teacher leaders in designing a curriculum and micro-credentials, pilot those initiatives at the secondary level, and construct a systemic approach to forging sustainable partnerships between secondary education, institutions of higher education, and Educators Rising

**Then** Educators Rising will be strategically positioned to put more talented high

school students on a path to high school completion, college degree attainment, and a successful transition into the teaching profession **AND** Educators Rising will be able to effectively support more local Grow-Your-Own teacher preparation programs to effectively develop the next generation of highly skilled educators.

In order to test my Theory of Action, I illustrate in this capstone how I worked with a team of teacher practitioners and the co-directors of Educators Rising to develop a co-curricular, school-based career pathway program (EdRising Academy Curriculum) to support diversity in Grow-Your-Own aspiring teacher programs in local communities for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, and develop micro-credentials (Educators Rising “Aspiring to Teach” micro-credentials) for students to demonstrate fundamental teaching skills in five discrete areas; I analyze the evidence to date of those effects. Finally, I reflect on the experience and the implications of that work on the sector, as well as site and self.

## Description, Evidence, and Analysis of Strategic Project

***“Every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom and at least one master teacher certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in every school. Our most promising young people also must get encouragement and support to become teachers.”***

***– Former President Bill Clinton***

### **My Strategic Project**

As described in the first sections of my capstone, my strategic project was to support the development of the EdRising Academy Curriculum and micro-credentials, which will be piloted in the 2017-2018 school year. More specifically, my strategic project has supported the creation of a curriculum to support diversity in Grow-Your-Own (GYO) initiatives in local communities, develop a pathway for aspiring educators (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders) to demonstrate fundamental teaching skills (micro-credentials), and engage in outreach and partnership-building efforts with stakeholders, with particular emphasis on minority-serving institutions.

### **My Role**

As the project manager, I supported the efforts in creating a practitioner-developed EdRising Academy Curriculum and micro-credentials that will front-load the teacher pipeline by putting intellectually talented and altruistically impassioned high school students on a pathway to a rewarding career in education. My original short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes were as follows:



***Short/Medium-term Outcomes (July 2016 – Nov. 2016)***

1. Create and communicate strategic project plan with clear and measurable outcomes
2. Identify and vet EdRising Academy Curriculum Development Team (aka SWAT Team)
3. Extrapolate curriculum topics from Educators Rising Standards and cross-cutting themes
4. Identify six specific micro-Credentials
5. Convene and facilitate SWAT Team's development of EdRising Academy Curriculum

***Long-term Outcomes (Nov. 2016 – March 2017)***

- Develop EdRising Academy Curriculum
- Flesh out the six micro-Credentials
- Establish coherent structure for partnership/affiliate/community growth and sustainability

Between June 2016 and April 2017, my strategic project has been organized into two overlapping strategic stages (Figure 10). They were as follows:

1. **Strategic Stage #1 - July 2016 – Nov. 2016** – Effective onboarding through perspective-taking and serving as project manager of the EdRising Academy Curriculum to support diversity in Grow-Your-Own initiatives in local communities; and
2. **Strategic Stage #2 - Dec. 2016 – April 2017** - Continued as project manager of the EdRising Academy Curriculum and supported a pathway development for

aspiring educators (11th and 12th graders) to demonstrate fundamental teaching skills (micro-credentials).

However, I started with three strategic Stages (Figure 11), which were:

1. **Strategic Stage #1 - July 2016 – Nov. 2016;**
2. **Strategic Stage #2 - Dec. 2016 – Jan. 2017; and**
3. **Strategic Stage #3 - Jan. 2017 – March 2017.**

Challenges encountered during the EdRising Academy Curriculum and additional residency responsibilities unrelated to my strategic project forced me to restructure not only my Strategic Stages' timeline, but my Theory of Action, which I will describe later in this section.

*Figure 10. Revised Strategic Stages*

<b>Strategic Stage #1</b>	<b>Strategic Stage #2</b>
<i>July 2016 – Nov. 2016</i>	<i>Dec. 2016 – April 2017</i>
Effective onboarding through perspective-taking and serving as project manager of the EdRising Academy Curriculum to support diversity in Grow- Your-Own initiatives in local communities.	Continued as project manager of the EdRising Academy Curriculum and supported a pathway development for aspiring educators (11th and 12th graders) to demonstrate fundamental teaching skills (micro-credentials).

*Figure 11. Original Strategic Stages*

<b>Strategic Stage #1</b>	<b>Strategic Stage #2</b>	<b>Strategic Stage #3</b>
<i>July 2016 – Nov. 2016</i>	<i>Dec. 2016 – Jan. 2017</i>	<i>Jan. 2017 – March 2017</i>
Effective onboarding through perspective-taking, and curriculum development to support diversity in Grow-Your-Own initiatives in local communities.	Pathway development for pre-preservice teachers (11th and 12th graders) to demonstrate fundamental teaching skills (micro-credentials).	Outreach and partnership-building efforts with stakeholders, with a particular emphasis on minority-serving institutions.

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**Stage #1 (July 2016 – Nov. 2016)**

Effective onboarding through perspective-taking and curriculum development to support diversity in Grow-Your-Own (GYO) initiatives in local communities

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***Residency Onboarding via Perspective-Taking***

I was extremely excited and enthusiastic to learn about my residency site. I had received valuable insight about the organization from multiple perspectives through the residency interviews, multiple and varying conversations with Ed.L.D. professors, my capstone committee members, and fellow Ed.L.D. cohort members who had some personal and or professional knowledge about the organization and its leader. However, I was still a bit unsure of what to expect. I wanted an opportunity to better understand its internal operations. I wanted the opportunity to see how the organization functioned publicly and how the public responded to it. I wanted to get an aerial perspective prior to my official start at the organization in July. Therefore, in order to achieve that perspective and gain a deeper understanding of the organizational context of my residency site, I chose to attend a couple of important events that my residency site hosted prior to the official start of my residency.

The first event I attended was the Educators Rising release of its Educators Rising Standards (Appendix A) for aspiring teenage educators. This was the perfect opportunity to gain insight about my residency site, as the Educators Rising Standards was going to play an integral part in the work that I was going to do in my residency year. To quote the founding co-director of Educators Rising, Dan Brown, “Educators Rising has developed seven standards to define what high school students exploring teaching need to know and be able to do to take their first steps on the path to accomplished teaching” (D. Brown, personal communication, July 5, 2016).

Sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA), the release of the standards was a major education event in Washington, D.C. and galvanized the collective attention of many influential national and local education stakeholders, influencers, and policy makers. There were leaders of NEA, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and Advance Career Technical Education all speaking together on the same stage about the importance of tending to the earliest part of the teaching pipeline. We also featured student voices from Educators Rising and the NEA Student Program.

NEA hosted the June 2016 release at its national headquarters in Washington, D.C., and highlighted an impressive partnership with other major national education organizations. The NEA and NBPTS had partnered with Educators Rising in January 2016 to support this initiative. As Lily Eskelsen Garcia, the President of NEA stated, the release event was meant to highlight on a national scale the Standards as a sustainable pipeline to recruit the best and brightest high school students into teaching to ensure the next generation of competent career education professionals. Attending this event was important to my transitioning into Educators Rising. It gave me insight to how some of the most influential education leaders were interacting as national leaders and insight to their thinking about how Educators Rising as a potential heavyweight in reshaping how talented individuals are attracted to and retained into the field of education.

Later in June, prior to the official start to my residency, I also attended the Educators Rising National Conference. The Educators Rising National Conference is a three-day convening of its state and local members (students and teacher

leaders). More specifically, the conference is an opportunity for high school students (aka “rising educators”) to come together to compete in authentic and engaging competitions that demonstrate their depth of knowledge in what it takes to become a great teacher (Appendix A). For example, rising educators competed in delivering an oral argument about educational issues to a live audience (creative lecture – TED Talk style) and competed to write and deliver subject area-specific lesson plans. Participating in this event was important because I had an opportunity to see the direct impact that Educators Rising was having on its target audience—aspiring educators. During this time period prior to the official start of my residency, I dove into the work supporting the organization in whatever ways were needed at the time. For example, during the Educators Rising National Conference, I worked side-by-side with Dan helping to ensure the conference ran smoothly, which included tasks like selling Educators Rising merchandise and stuffing participant gift bags. Although these were minor tasks, they afforded me the opportunity to successfully enter my residency site and forge meaningful relationships with the entire staff. Attending the Standards release and the Educators Rising National Conference served as an ideal launching board into my residency because, after my strategic project evolved into a frantic dash to produce a gold-standard curriculum and micro-credentials, there was insufficient time to spend nurturing relationships.

### ***My Official Residency Start***

On my first official day, July 5th, 2016, my deep dive into perspective-taking through low-level observations began by participating in the senior-level staff meeting for Phi Delta Kappa International. That meeting and the subsequent Educators Rising

team meeting later in the week, continued to illuminate for me how Educators Rising functions as an organization nestled within Phi Delta Kappa, the parent organization.

I observed in my first Educators Rising team meeting that it had a clear vision as an organization and a pathway for accomplishing its organizational goals, whereas Phi Delta Kappa was in the nascent stage of recrafting its vision, mission, and goals setting. Phi Delta Kappa has been around since 1906. However, the last few years of the organization have seen a precipitous drop in its perceived public value to the broader educational sector. During the past 15 years, it lost approximately 90% of its membership, which translates to drastically lowered revenue for the organization. A new CEO joined the organization in 2015. Since that time, the organization has continued to find its bearings and develop an agreed-upon, board-sanctioned vision and mission.

Based upon my participation in executive, senior-level board events and discussions related to the strategic direction of the organization, as well as my knowledge of the scope of work that needed to be accomplished, I had a much clearer notion of what success in my residency could look like for me and for Educators Rising.

To know whether I had achieved success, or not, I identified clear measures of short-term, medium-term, and long-term success for my strategic project. In order to effectively and expeditiously enact my Theory of Action and gauge my measures of success, I chose to focus on several key actions. Figure 12 illustrates examples of only some of those actions I undertook that would put me on the path of success for implementing and achieving the Theory of Action:

*Figure 12. Key Strategies and Actions Linked to Theory of Action*

Theory of Action	Key Strategies and Actions
Facilitate the convening of a committee of teacher leaders in designing a curriculum and micro-credentials,	1. Build a gold-standard co-curricular program to help high school students explore teaching.
Successfully pilot those initiatives at the secondary level,	2. Provide management, engagement, and accountability for strategic planning and development of high-priority EdRising Academy products (e.g. curriculum and micro-credentials).
Construct a systemic approach to forging sustainable partnerships between secondary education, institutions of higher education, and Educators Rising,	3. Participate in executive and board meetings, and engage in discussions related to the strategic direction of the organization. 4. Effectively align high-priority EdRising Academy products with researching and writing capstone. 5. Facilitate stakeholder engagement and sustainability.
Put more talented high school students on a path to high school completion, college degree attainment,	6. Actively participate as a thought partner with consultants in the building of logic models to ensure policy guidance for LEAs and SEAs for leveraging public funding streams.
Pilot those initiatives at the secondary level,	7. Conduct research and make recommendations on best practices for engaging higher education partners in secondary-based programs, especially in career and technical education. 8. Develop postsecondary expansion strategy

		for Educators Rising and recruit pilot partners, with a particular focus on minority-serving institutions.
Construct a systemic approach to forging sustainable partnerships between secondary education, institutions of higher education, and Educators Rising.	9.	Engage in outreach, enhancement, and partnership-building efforts with stakeholder organizations, with special emphasis on minority-serving organizations, to support EdRising Academy implementation.

In late spring of 2016, Educators Rising’s co-directors sent an application process to all Educator Rising members and networks like NEA, AFT, and NBPTS, to identify elite educators. Those educators formed the team that would assume the charge of developing the EdRising Academy curriculum and micro-credentials. Later, this diverse team of experts in the field of K-12 and higher education leaders, which served on the Curriculum Development Team, would become affectionately known as the SWAT Team. They have years of experience and a proven track record with teaching cultural competence, teacher preparation coursework and instruction, curriculum development for secondary students, and performance-based assessment design.

The application process started in May, and hundreds of candidates from throughout the country applied. By the time I started my residency, Dan, Co-Director of Educators Rising, had already narrowed the list down to less than 100 candidates. However, that is where the curriculum team selection process stopped because, as Dan stated, “We intentionally waited for you [me] to come onboard to finish vetting candidates for the Curriculum Development Team.” So, from that list, Dan—the co-



director—and I selected 14 candidates from throughout the country to serve as the Curriculum Development Team (aka SWAT team).

The SWAT Team convened in D.C. during the second week of August for three full days to start developing the EdRising Academy Curriculum and micro-credentials. The second convening occurred during the last week of September for three days. Dan and I co-led both of the in-person convenings. I served as the main contact lead during the first and second in-person convenings and the 40-day virtual curriculum development work between the two in-person convenings, as well as the lead contact for the post second-convening virtual teamwork.

Prior to the first convening, I developed a detailed three-day agenda for our first face-to-face convening. My goal in producing a detailed agenda was to ensure it created a clear and well-defined structure for meeting our convening objective, which was to begin the development of the Educators Rising Academy Curriculum and micro-credentials. For example, the agenda allowed the SWAT Team to work as a whole group, but then split into four smaller working groups to tackle the heavy lifting; two working on micro-credentials, and two working on curriculum. Additionally, I designed the agenda to ensure that we received real-time feedback from the SWAT Team at the end of each day. I, along with Dan and WiseWire, needed to know how the SWAT Team felt about the work, where they needed support, and how we could quickly provide it to them when needed. WiseWire is a Baltimore-based curriculum development firm focused on improving access to high-quality digital learning materials to engage and inspire students. The co-directors of Educators Rising contracted with them before the start of my residency as additional reviewers and editors during the

process of developing the curriculum. Each small group had an assigned facilitator and note-taker to ensure the discussion stayed on track.

Dan provided feedback on the agenda. I tweaked it and we moved forward with it as our guide to an effective three-day convening with the SWAT Team. Dan and I agreed that we wanted to let the SWAT Team direct ideas and discussions so that we did not influence them too much during their generative process. We wanted to elicit the topics that were “must-have” from their experience, which we thought would reveal any gaps and confirm a lot about their thinking about the curriculum.

For the first convening, Dan and I facilitated helping the SWAT Team, in a whole-group session, build consensus on the foundational topics for the curriculum and the micro-credentials. Dan, WiseWire, and I were critical thought partners throughout this entire process and convening. Our triad of collaboration was strategic in that we met weekly leading up to the first convening, and debriefed during each break of the convening and after each day of convening to make decisions about how the SWAT Team was progressing, as well as how we could support them. The foundational topics reflected what the team thought and what research suggested aspiring educators need to know at the high school (11th and 12th grade) levels. See Appendix B for what research shows are teachers’ views on the importance of various skills and characteristics to being a great teacher.

Before the end of the first convening, I drafted a timeline for the small groups to guide them when working virtually during the forty days between the first and second convenings. As with most decisions during this process, Dan and WiseWire provided input for the final timeline, which is reflected below.

- 8/29: First draft of all materials sent to Educators Rising and WiseWire
- 9/2: Educators Rising and WiseWire will return materials with feedback
- 9/7: Second draft of all materials due – will be sent in a jigsaw to other groups
- 9/14: Deadline to supply feedback to other groups. You will receive feedback on your materials by this day.
- 9/19: Deadline for final drafts of all materials due to Educators Rising and WiseWire.

At the end of the first convening, our thinking was that pieces of the curriculum needed to be completed by certain SWAT Team members. This suggestion was based upon observations during the three-day convening and the skills each member brought to the process of curriculum development. During the forty-day interim, there were four SWAT sub-teams: Two for micro-credentials and two for curriculum resources development. One micro-credential sub-team developed clinical micro-credentials, and the other developed non-clinical micro-credentials. Each of the curriculum sub-teams developed lessons for two topics (Figure 13).

*Figure 13. Breakdown of Small Groups by Topics*

\* The words **in red** are the names the SWAT Team small groups developed for themselves during the first convening small-group sessions.

Group	Topics
<b>Micro-credentials</b> (non-clinical) <b>Triple Threat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying equity</li> <li>• Understanding bias</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Action research on a community issues</li> </ul>
<b>Micro-credentials</b> (clinical) <b>TPO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiation</li> <li>• Formative assessment</li> <li>• The First Five Minutes (Engagement)</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum</b> <b>PEEPPS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customizing to student needs</li> <li>• Norms and routines for learning environments</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum</b> <b>Lokahi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding student cultures and backgrounds</li> <li>• Unpacking bias</li> </ul>

I served as main point of contact for the SWAT Team during the forty weekdays between the first and second convening. I asked each team to select a team leader who

would report directly to me for weekly check-ins during this period. Throughout this period, the teams worked virtually to flesh-out the topics into lesson plans that would serve as exemplars for the development of the remaining topics that would be fleshed out after the second convening.

Leading the teams virtually during this period was a challenge for me. It was challenging because regardless of how much I worked to support the teams, my efforts did not help the teams produce the desired results. I had to work closely with teams that were struggling with navigating extremely tight timelines for creating original work and giving fellow teammates constructive feedback. I tried asking them the right questions. For example, during my weekly check-ins with the SWAT Team small group leaders, I wanted to know what their team had accomplished. I needed to know this in order to gauge whether or not their teams were on track to meet each round of deliverables. I also wanted to know what their plans were for the next week and whether they felt like each of their team members were on track to meet the internal small-group deadlines. Each small group navigated their small group work differently, but generally speaking, each small group member was responsible for contributing pieces of the work to generate group products, which was a collection of original lesson plans and resources based upon their assigned topics. I also needed to know what I could do to meet their individual group needs. Knowing this allowed me to know the group needs as well as the individual group member's needs. Whenever I needed additional support in meeting those needs, Dan and/or WiseWire were invaluable resources for me in leading the small team group virtual work. I encouraged the team leaders to ask questions at any time about any aspect of the work. Teams did not have

to wait to submit their work. If they finished early, their team leader could submit it in advance of any deadline.

The second convening was used to provide group feedback and revisions of the most recent work they submitted prior to the convening. The goal of the second convening was to finalize the development of the micro-credentials, where all the groups could work collaboratively to continue fleshing out all of the curriculum topics into lesson plans and resources.

After the second convening, all four small teams worked on finishing the curriculum with the goal of having it totally completed by late December 2016. The original goal was to have the micro-credentials completed by mid-October 2016. We ended up shifting the curriculum development date to early spring 2017, and the micro-credentials completion date was pushed from mid-October to mid-December. As it turned out, we needed much more time to develop a gold-standard curriculum, which I will describe further in the Analysis section of this capstone. A pilot of these products will occur after my residency in spring 2017.

Additionally, the challenge of having to pivot directions with finishing the curriculum development, and the additional residency demands of supporting Phi Delta Kappa more directly than I had anticipated, limited the time I spent on the third phase of my residency, which was the partnership development stage. However, I did eke out some time to not only create a partnership development timeline, but also develop a detailed logic model (Appendix G) for developing partnerships and identify through research some best practices for establishing partnerships between not-for-profits and school districts. I targeted research on how to forge partnerships between districts and

not-for-profits because the co-directors of Educators Rising specifically requested more information about how that work might look.

I worked closely with Educators Rising co-directors, Dan Brown and Ashley Kincaid, and the entire Educators Rising staff, as well as the senior leadership of Phi Delta Kappa International, including the CEO. Additionally, I collaborated in close consultation with the following groups and key stakeholders at strategically critical intervals:

- **American Institute for Research (AIR) Consultants:** *Founded in 1946, AIR provides the world's largest independent, objective, and non-partisanship, behavioral and social science research and evaluation analysis.*
- **Curriculum Development Team:** *This is a team of 15 selected from a nationwide search, representing a diverse group of experts in the field. They have a proven track record with teaching cultural competence, teacher preparation coursework and instruction, curriculum development for secondary students, and performance-based assessment design. Dan Brown, co-director of Educators Rising, and I rigorously vetted this team in early July 2016.*
- **Digital Promise:** *This is a non-for-profit profit organization originated by the U.S. Congress as part of the 2008 re-authorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act. It works at the intersection of education leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs, and developers to improve learning with the power of technology for all Americans.*

- **Remote Social:** *This firm is a full-service digital consultancy, specializing in social media. It will support Educators Rising build and maintain the EdRising Virtual Campus, where the EdRising Academy will be housed.*
- **Florida Department of Education:** *Responsible for providing information, resources, and technical assistance on educational matters to schools and residents.*
- **WiseWire consultants:** *Based in Baltimore, WiseWire is a curriculum development firm focused on improving access to high-quality digital learning materials to engage and inspire students.*
- **Independent Consultant:** Responsible for training and support for EdRising Academy clinical experiences.

For my capstone, I specifically narrowed my focus of work to the first two stages. Although the third stage was still in progress at the time this capstone was completed, I will discuss how it is critical to the full implementation of Stages #1 and #2 of my overall strategic action plan.

## **Evidence**

After several months of implementing my strategic action plan, there was clear evidence to support that my efforts, along with the entire team's efforts, were moving along the trajectory of success I had envisioned for most of my predicted residency outcomes expressed in my Theory of Action. I knew this for the following three reasons: 1) the curriculum development phase was nearly 60% complete, 2) the micro-

credentials were completed and went public the first week of January 2017, 3) the partnership development phase was scheduled to kick into action in mid-December 2016.

### ***Curriculum Development***

When I entered my residency in early July, the goal was to create a curriculum for the EdRising Academy. That curriculum would be a new gold-standard education pathway in secondary schools across America. The vision for the curriculum would consist of having at least 118 topics developed as the basis for that curriculum. The concept or format of the curriculum was a “menu”—we would provide more than enough content, and Educators Rising would train and support teacher leaders to customize their own scope and sequence based on local context and student interest. Those 118 researched-backed topics would be based upon topics that the SWAT Team and comprehensive research demonstrated as the most important things aspiring educators would need to know at the secondary level. Once the 118 topics were identified and agreed upon, the SWAT Team categorized them into five large domains, which shaped how participants needed to conceptualize what it means to be an educator: 1) You, 2) Your Students, 3) Your Classroom, 4) Your Community, and 5) Your Profession. Those five domains were identified as an effective and logically user-friendly method to categorize the 118 topics for the teacher leader, who ultimately has the responsibility of implementing the curriculum. Those five domains were then subdivided into focus areas (Figure 14). For example, the “You” domain was subdivided into the following focus areas deemed pertinent for that particular domain: 1) Self-awareness, 2) Personal Expectations, 3) Improvement, 4) Critical Thinking, and 5) Leadership. The specific



lessons were developed within each one of those sub-domain topic areas. For example, the following eight lesson plans were developed for the “Self-Awareness” sub-domain:

- 1) My Identity, 2) Understanding Bias, 3) Understanding Equity, 4) My Values, 5) StrengthsFinder, 6) Empathy, 7) The Impact I Will Have, and 8) My Teacher Persona.

Figure 14. Visual Representation of One Domain and Its Sub-domain Topics



As figure 14 indicates, there is much for the teacher leader to consider when implementing the curriculum. Therefore, the design of the curriculum is structured for

flexibility. That means it can be implemented within a one- or two-year timeframe. The curriculum is also designed in a non-linear fashion. The teacher leaders can pick and choose which topic areas (domains) they would like to have their students engage in during the course of the school year. This degree of flexibility allows individual Grow-Your-Own communities to adopt and implement the curriculum in the way that most fits their needs. If the school year of the community is a quarter or semester schedule, the curriculum can be adapted to fit that. The Grow-Your-Own curriculum is housed within the EdRising Academy, which can be a part of the career technical education (CTE) courses offered to high school students as another CTE course option. Educators Rising is not an afterschool club like its predecessor, Future Educators Association.

The curriculum does provide some non-negotiables. There are certain topic areas that must be implemented. The SWAT Team identified twenty-one “must-do” topics for the curriculum. Those twenty-one must-do topics were identified as being critical to the foundation of what teenage, aspiring educators need to know and be able to do on their road to great teaching. For example, the SWAT Team agreed that Identifying Equity, Growth Mindset, and Understanding Bias were must-do topics for the curriculum. The SWAT Team also developed and agreed to use a template for every lesson. Although each lesson consisted of unique content specific to a particular topic, the format for each lesson aligned to one format.

Between early September and later December, I, along with Dan, led the 14-member SWAT Team, working at breakneck speed (in-person and virtually) to complete 40% of the work (48 lesson plans). That process involved writing and revising (at least two times) each one of the lesson plans. WiseWire, our curriculum development

consultant firm, provided additional support by being another set of eyes on the submitted lessons. Copious and constructive feedback was provided on every lesson during each iteration of lesson plan creation. The SWAT Team submitted the final iteration of their lesson plans on December 14<sup>th</sup>. The remaining 60% (70 lesson plans) of the curriculum was to be developed by the Arizona K12 Center. Just as our Curriculum Development Team was known as the SWAT Team, our Arizona K12 Center partner was called the Closers. They were specifically charged with two tasks: 1) Review the first 40% of the curriculum that was developed by the SWAT Team to ensure that the quality and rigor of the lessons can serve as the gold standard for what aspiring educators at the high school level should know as great educators, 2) Complete the remaining 70% of the EdRising Academy curriculum by May 2017.

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**Stage #2 (Dec. 2016 – March. 2017)**

Pathway development for aspiring educators (11th and 12th graders) to demonstrate fundamental teaching skills (micro-credentials)

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***Micro-credentials***

Further evidence I was on track to achieve my residency goals was illustrated by the completed and launched micro-credentials. The development of the micro-credentials followed a similar development path as the lesson plans. However, the format for micro-credentials followed a different template for several reasons. One of the two primary reasons for this was because the micro-credentials serve a different purpose than the individual lessons in the curriculum. As clinical and non-clinical summative assessments, the micro-credentials represent the method aspiring educators will use to demonstrate their level of expertise. The micro-credentials were constructed to allow aspiring teachers the opportunity to demonstrate their level of

competency as it relates to specific skills. The micro-credentials are accessible on the Digital Promise/Bloomboard website. Aspiring educators will be able to complete these assessments as major projects in their school-based programs, whether or not they are using the EdRising Academy curriculum. However, progression through the EdRising Academy is designed to prepare students for success in earning micro-credentials.

When I started my residency, the idea was to have at least seven or eight micro-credentials. However, during the course of the months of working with our micro-credential partner, Digital Promise, we decided it was best to go with five as an initial package of micro-credentials for the curriculum. Digital Promise is a not-for-profit organization originated by the U.S. Congress as part of the 2008 re-authorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act. It works at the intersection of education leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs, and developers to improve learning with the power of technology for all Americans. After close collaboration with Digital Promise, we agreed on the five micro-credentials (Figure 15) that would best meet the assessment goals for the overall curriculum. They are: 1) Anti-Bias Instruction, 2) Classroom Culture, 3) Collaboration, 4) Formative Assessment, and 5) Learner Engagement. These five micro-credentials are specifically aligned to the twenty-one must-do lesson topics, which undergird the foundation for thoroughly preparing aspiring educators. See Figure 15 for an example of the prototyped micro-credential or “badge” a student will earn after completing a micro-credential.

Figure 15. Micro-credential Digital Badges



The format for micro-credentials follows a template different from the lessons because their creation must align with the review and approval process set forth by the American Council on Education College Credit recommendation service (ACE). With over 35,000 programs reviewed, this organization is the national leader in the evaluation process for education and training obtained outside the classroom including courses, exams, apprenticeships, and other types of nontraditional forms of training. ACE will review the stack of five micro-credentials as a course, and hopefully make a recommendation that earning all five micro-credentials should be worth three general education college credits. Then, any of the more than two-thousand institutions of

higher education that have signed on to ACE will confer those three general education credits if an earner matriculates there. This would be a game-changing incentive for high school students anywhere to be able to earn early college credit, and it would satisfy an administrative requirement that CTE programs of study culminate with either professional certification or early college credit. The reality of this last point further illustrates how my support of the work of Educators Rising is the actualization of the “then” statement of my Theory of Action, which says Educators Rising will be able to effectively support more local Grow-Your-Own teacher preparation programs to effectively develop the next generation of highly skilled educators.

To illustrate my evidence more specifically, 100% of my short/medium-term outcomes have been achieved thus far, five out of five; and 33% of my long-term outcomes have been achieved, one out of three. Here is a quick reference of the originally stated project goals:

***Short/Medium-term Outcomes (July 2016 – Nov. 2016)***

1. Create and communicate strategic project plan with clear and measurable outcomes **(completed)**
2. Identify and vet EdRising Academy Curriculum **(completed)**
3. Extrapolate curriculum topics from Educators Rising Standards and cross-cutting themes **(completed)**
4. Identify six specific Micro-credentials - *modified to five Micro-credentials* **(completed)**
5. Convene and facilitate SWAT Team’s development of EdRising Curriculum **(completed)**

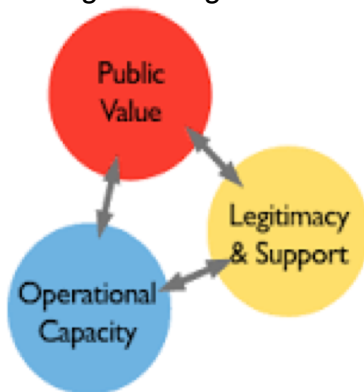
### **Long-term Outcomes (Nov. 2016 – March 2017)**

1. Develop EdRising Academy Curriculum (**still in progress**)
2. Flesh out the six Micro-credentials - *modified to five Micro-credentials* (**completed**)
3. Establish a coherent structure for partnership/affiliate/community growth and sustainability (**still in progress**)

### **Analysis Framework**

In order to better understand the complex and unexpected nature of why my strategic project took an unexpected pivot during the curriculum development and what the organization should be paying attention to, I analyzed the situation through Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership framework. Although I utilized the Heifetz framework, it was not the lens I originally selected. My original plan was to use Mark Moore's Strategic Triangle

*Figure 16. Mark Moore's Strategic Triangle*



Caption from Moore, Ronald H. *Recognizing Public Value*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2013, pg. 103

framework to analyze my project. I thought this because I initially believed my analysis would be rooted in how I could support Educators Rising through three lenses of 1) building public value, 2) legitimacy and support, and 3) operational capacity, as illustrated in Figure 16. My initial thinking centered on Moore's Strategic Triangle because it best represented the critical elements of what I thought I needed to understand in order to support Educators Rising in achieving its goals. More specifically, the Strategic

Triangle framework allowed me to ask three important questions. First, what is the

important *public value* Educators Rising seeks to produce? My contention is that today's teacher preparation must reflect the diverse social and economic needs of today's students, which were unimaginable in previous generations. The public value Educators Rising seeks to produce is demonstrating how an effective pathway into teaching can start at the secondary level. By attracting more top-notch and diverse students on the front end of the teacher pipeline through local community Grow-Your-Own teacher recruitment programs, the quality and quantity of teachers will begin to fill the public's demand for more career-technical or skills-based classes to better meet the needs of local communities. More importantly, through GYO, 1) local communities will have more opportunities to offer input about how teachers are trained starting at the secondary level to meet the specific demands of their community and 2) have more teachers who are from their community in front of their children.

Second, what sources of *legitimacy and support* would be relied upon to authorize Educators Rising to take action and provide the resources necessary to sustain the effort to create that value? Educators Rising seeks to tap into diverse teacher leaders throughout its network of nearly thirty thousand members to build legitimacy and support for its initiatives. For example, the newly released Educators Rising Standards were created by current practitioners.

And, third, what *operational capacities* (including new investments and innovations such as the EdRising Academy Curriculum and Micro-credentials) would the organization rely on (or have to develop) to deliver the desired results? (Moore & Khagram, 2004). In order to meet the foreseeable demands of operationalizing the proposed initiatives to develop the EdRising Academy Curriculum and Micro-



credentials, Educators Rising partnered with several organizations to ensure its ability to meeting its intended goals and develop greater organizational capacity.

I used to think along these three lenses. At the time, this framework made plenty of sense to me. Educators Rising needed to build public value and legitimacy and support for its goal to create, pilot, implement, scale, and sustain its Grow-Your-Own EdRising Academy Curriculum and Micro-credentials to develop a more diverse pipeline of aspiring educators starting at the high school level. The operational capacity would be supported through the work of my project. However, in retrospect, after diving deep into the work of leading the SWAT Team in the development of the EdRising Academy Curriculum, I soon began to realize that—while building public value, legitimacy, and support was still important to the work—those components were not at the heart of what I would need to address in my project of creating the EdRising Academy Curriculum. The root-cause for an unexpected pivot in my project's work surfaced after the first convening of the SWAT Team. My root-cause analysis revealed that my real work was founded in understanding technical versus adaptive leadership, as it relates to Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership framework.

***The Curriculum Development Team, aka SWAT Team***

Knowing that people take ownership of what they help to create, Dan and I selected the SWAT Team because of their proven track record as practitioners who were doing real work on a daily basis around curriculum development and implementation in the field of teacher preparation. The EdRising Academy Curriculum was developed by practitioners for practitioners. For example, the SWAT Team members brought deep experiences as educators to the team, including: teacher leaders within a high school career and technical education programs, a field instructor, a mentor, a director, a dean, and an effectiveness coach for college teacher preparation programs. Several SWAT Team members were previous state teachers of the year.

Careful consideration had gone into selecting this group. We created a selection rubric that included the following components: 1) years of experience, 2) geography (e.g., states representing the entire country, from as far west as Hawaii to as far east as New York, and as far north as Montana as far south as Texas), 3) education sector (e.g., K-12 and higher education), 4) gender, 5) race, 6) affiliations (e.g., NEA, AFT), 7) recommendations as a proven leader in their work space, and 8) National Board Certified, of which four were.

Ultimately, our final selection of candidates represented all of our aspirational components for the team. Dan and I felt like we had assembled the right group for the task to meet our goal of developing a gold-standard curriculum for high school students to begin their pathway of becoming an effective teacher. We were so confident in our vetting process and in the skills, knowledge, and experience the team would bring to the table that we nicknamed the Curriculum Development Team the SWAT Team. Yes, this would be our elite group of highly specialized practitioners/educators who would solve

our difficult and urgent problem of creating a coherent pathway for more diverse and effectively trained rising educators to enter the teaching field.

### ***Technical Is Not Always Just Technical***

My entry into the organization gave me a bird's-eye view of its culture and operational capacity as a startup. These opportunities were critical to my learning because they allowed me to have a perspective from multiple lenses. For example, during the Standards release, I unobtrusively observed the entire event from that of a senior-level lens (e.g., national education leaders) and engaged in high-level conversation about the direction of education reform across the nation. During the national annual conference, I viewed the event from the lens of active participants (the high school students) by engaging some of them one-on-one in conversations about what and how they were learning to become effective educators. This is important because as I took a deep-dive into understanding and making sense of the full scope of the work, especially as it related to my project of leading the SWAT Team, I had to think about the work through a leader's lens that understood the challenges of accomplishing a goal with limited organizational capacity. I wondered how the work could possibly get completed with major time constraints and limited, albeit highly capable, human capital. The co-directors of Educators Rising had developed an organizational timeline for all the work, which included my project of leading the SWAT Team in the development of the EdRising Academy Curriculum. The development cycle for the curriculum was between August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016—yes, just a few months to create the entire EdRising Academy Curriculum for rising educators. We all knew we needed to move as fast as we could because the curriculum pilot would take place in the 2017-

2018 school year. The December deadline for the Curriculum Development Team gave us space to extend their contracts or to go in a different direction to revise/complete the work.

When Dan officially announced during the Educators Rising team meeting that I would be the SWAT Team lead on my birthday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016, I was extremely excited; however, somewhere in the back of my mind, I questioned the feasibility of the project completion timeline. My onboarding observations afforded me the perspective of knowing that the Educators Rising staff had the passion, skills, and stick-to-itiveness needed for the momentous task of accomplishing their organizational goals. However, my onboarding observations also made me wonder about the organizational capacity of Educators Rising, especially since the team was reduced to only six members because one co-director was out on maternity leave for another three months. I remember thinking that, at some point during this residency, I would have to put a stake in the ground about what I thought really mattered. I would have to do this because I feared time would not allow what I desired to accomplish to come to full fruition in just ten months. Achieving a gold-standard curriculum mattered the most.

Unfortunately, I approached the issue of Educators Rising's organizational capacity to develop the EdRising Academy Curriculum as a technical challenge. A technical challenge can be defined as one that can be solved with expert knowledge. I was concerned about technical issues like: How would the SWAT Team identify what the most critical topics that rising educators should know are on their pathway to teaching? What would be the process for gaining consensus among the SWAT Team members for those most critical topics? How quickly would the SWAT Team be able to

translate those topics into culturally relevant, engaging, and innovative 21<sup>st</sup>-century lesson plans? How quickly would I be able to provide constructive and meaningful feedback and support when the lessons were submitted? How would I be able to support the development of the curriculum with only two face-to-face convenings and the rest of the curriculum development occurring virtually? Those were just a few of the questions swirling around in my head. Secretly, maybe even unconsciously, I also thought about my ability to fully engage and lead the work, while still creating the space for some semblance of work-life balance. For a moment, during Dan's announcement about me leading the SWAT Team, I was momentarily annoyed because, in previous work environments as a childless gay man, when I have called for greater work-life balance, I sometimes felt judged by those who lament the time-consuming role of child-rearing. I wondered how these concerns would impact my performance, thus influencing my Theory of Action.

To strategically navigate what I viewed as technical challenges, I developed an agenda for the first face-to-face convening of the SWAT Team in the Educators Rising office that would address my thoughts and concerns about meeting our goals. As indicated in the agenda, during a series of small, large, and whole-group activities, very little workgroup tension developed in identifying curriculum topics and agreeing on which ones should be flagged as priorities or "must dos" for the curriculum. The priority topics were the ones the SWAT Team selected based upon supporting research. For example, classroom management was identified as a priority and is also supported by research as being extremely important in a teacher preparation program. See Figure 17 for a complete topics list.

Figure 17. Curriculum Topics List

\* The topics in red are the curriculum “must-dos”, which means the implementer must teach them. \* The topics in blue are the clinical (c) and non-clinical (nc) lessons.

<b>Topic 1 -</b> Submitted 10/21 Receive feedback 10/25 Submit final lessons 10/31	<b>Topic 2 - Outline</b> due 11/2 Receive feedback 11/4-8 Receive Outline for Topic #3 Final lessons due 11/13	<b>Topic 3 - Outline</b> due 11/16 (Sync up 11/21) Receive feedback 11/22 Final lessons due 12/2	<b>Topic 4 -No Outline</b> due Final lessons due 12/14
Critical Thinking: My Experiences	<b>Professionalism</b>	Selecting the Right College	<b>Civic Engagement</b> (Microcredential? See Action Research on a Community Issue)
<b>Growth Mindset</b>	<b>Differentiation</b> (Microcredential-c)	<b>Assessment 101</b>	Classroom Norms and Routines
Checking Student Understanding (during and at the conclusion of lessons)	Using Data to Inform Instruction	Designing Single Lessons and Sequences of Lessons	Local/Regional Culture
Profiles of Effective Educators	Professional Skills and Terminology	Being an Ambassador for the Profession	Explaining and Modeling Content, Practices, and Strategies
High Personal Standards	Integrating Technology into Instruction	Local Governance and Policy Making	Union, Collective Bargaining, Due Process
<b>Understanding Bias</b> (Micro-credential-nc)	<b>Special Education 101</b>	Inclusive Learning Environments	Culturally Relevant Teaching
National Board 101: Five Core Propositions	Professional Associations and Organizations for Educators	Learning the Ropes/Unpacking Educators Rising Standards	Selecting the Right College
<b>Collaboration</b>	Asset-Based	Motivation	Setting Up and

<b>with Colleagues (Micro-credential-nc)</b>	Approach		Managing Small Group Work
<b>Culturally Relevant Teaching</b>	Expectations for Students	Building Relationships with Parents and Other Caregivers	Common Characteristics of Successful Leaders
Experiential Learning	Responsible Use of Social Media and Online Platforms	Analyzing Instruction for the Purpose of Improving It	Cognitive Development (Vygotsky, Piaget)
The Importance of Content Knowledge	Providing Oral and Written Feedback to Students	<b>Formative Assessment (Micro-credential-c)</b>	Interpreting the results of Student Work, Including Routine Assignments, Quizzes, Tests, Projects, and Standardized Assessments
Becoming a Change Agent	<b>Identifying Equity (Micro-credential-nc)</b>	Inclusive Learning Environments	Building Mutual Respect

By the end of the first convening, Dan and I were confident in the small sub-groups' ability to effectively collaborate to move the work forward. We had applied our know-how to address the issues such as individual working styles and topic preference to formulate what we regarded as strong small groups. I felt confident about the SWAT Team, as small groups, to meet the challenges of continuing the curriculum development. I had observed the SWAT Team rise to the challenge of not only identifying what topics aspiring educators needed to know, but also collaborating, respectfully pushing each other, and agreeing upon what topics were must-dos for the curriculum. Additionally, the SWAT Team had successfully collaborated in small and

large groups to strategically align those topics to the Educators Rising cross-cutting themes, which are as follows: Cultural Competence, Fairness, Equity and Diversity, Reflective Practice, Ethics, Collaboration, Social Justice and Advocacy, and Self-Efficacy. During both in-person convenings, I consistently reminded the SWAT Team of the purpose of the cross-cutting themes. These were developed to communicate a sense of direction for rising educators and a vision for the profession. Unfortunately, my observations were misdiagnosed. The skills I observed during the convening were not the skills needed to complete the curriculum. Curating material as opposed to creating material required much more time and a different set of skills than originally anticipated.

Our simple solution to getting the work of developing a gold-standard curriculum completed was to follow through with our plan of action. I would continue to lead the individual small groups during the “virtual” work period. The virtual work period referred to the time between the first and second in-person convenings (August 13<sup>th</sup> to September 21<sup>st</sup>). Dan and the WiseWire professionals would continue to support the work where and when needed. A technical solution was implemented when any minor issue surfaced. When the first round of deliverables (the first draft of topic specific lesson plans from each group) was submitted as scheduled, I thought we were on the right trajectory and that our challenges were only going to be technical ones, which we could solve with our current problem-solving process. For example, during the first convening, our initial small group configuration missed the mark. Some small groups had too many polarizing personalities that impeded or prolonged the work, whereas, another small group lacked the particular area of expertise to develop a curriculum based upon their knowledge and experience. Dan and I, along with WiseWire, huddled



up, exchanged notes about our observations of individuals' strengths and weaknesses, agreed upon new group configurations based upon those observations, and implemented the changes. Most SWAT Team members were moved to different teams.

I thought we had a technical solution to a technical problem. It was not until I read the first draft of the lessons from the SWAT Team that I began to think differently.

### ***Adaptive Challenge***

The first draft of the deliverables from the SWAT Team small groups were not up to the standard of innovation, rigor, engagement, and cultural awareness, we had anticipated. Actually, most of the lessons did not reach the gold-standard level. For example, in most of the lesson plans the following shortcomings surfaced:

- Lesson plans did not incorporate Educators Rising cross-cutting themes
- Lesson plans did not promote high-interest and inspiring tasks for students
- Lesson plans did not align with state lesson plan learning objectives
- Lesson plans were not student-centered (e.g., too many videos)
- Lesson content was not supported by valid/reliable resources
- Lesson plans were not aligned to the Educators Rising Standards
- Lesson plans did not use technology in meaningful ways (not integrated)
- Lesson plans tasks did not promote deeper learning, reflective activities

Why were the lesson plans that the SWAT Team submitted so off-target from what I had expected? Had I not given clear direction? Was my focus not aligned with achieving the goal of developing a rising educator curriculum in such a short time

frame? I reflected on some of the actions I had taken over the past couple of months, which were as follows:

- Created a thoughtful agenda for the first convening with measureable goals and outcomes
- Collaborated with Dan and a professional curriculum development firm (WiseWire) to solve issues as they arose during the convenings
- Facilitated whole-group and small-group sessions to ensure group tasks were being accomplished
- Set expectations and explained next steps for deliverables for the time frame between the first and second convening
- Coordinated with small team leaders
- Supported small team leaders by conducting weekly virtual check-ins with them to ensure they were on track to submit the first draft of lesson plans
- Quickly responded to texts, emails, and phone calls from any SWAT Team member between weekly check-ins

Countless hours of meticulous strategic planning went into every step along the way leading to the first deliverables. However, my work had not produced the desired outcomes. What had I done wrong? Had I not understood or effectively listened to Dan's vision for the work? Or was it the SWAT Team's inability to create a curriculum as opposed to simply critiquing and implementing it? Like most challenges, it was a combination of all the above. I could not help but to reflect on one of my questions from my August 2016 strategic memorandum of understanding, which asked: What are the most effective levers in building legitimacy and support for the EdRising Academy

Curriculum and Micro-credentials? I did not have the answer when I posed that question a few months ago; however, I now know that the answer is clearly rooted in ensuring that the curriculum demonstrates the highest standard of innovation, rigor, engagement, and cultural awareness possible. Developing the gold-standard for aspiring educators builds credibility. When the first submissions did not represent that aspiration, I felt temporarily defeated, but not hopeless. In planning to give feedback to the teams, and in planning for the second convening, I doubled-down my efforts. I was still confident about the inputs that were needed to produce the desired outputs.

In an attempt to overcome the challenge of our curriculum development efforts derailing into a pile of frustrating and demoralizing pile of rubbish, Dan and I, as well as WiseWire, continued to closely collaborate on every detail of the curriculum development. The “EdRising Academy Curriculum Checklist” (Appendix C) was created during our strategic planning meetings. Not only did we think that more direction and clarity in those directions were needed, feedback from some of the SWAT Team members supported our thinking. The transcript below is from one of the SWAT team leaders:

Hi Dan and Dwight. Sally\* and I met today and talked through the information for our next task. We will all be meeting in the next few days to collaborate. We are having difficulty getting a handle on our direction and probably need more guidance. Below are some reflections and questions from that conversation:

- Thanks for sending some specifics about what the lesson plans need to include as well as questions we need to consider when writing them.
- We want to make sure we spend the time wisely and are hoping for just a bit more clarification. Could you please define what you mean by *stakeholders* as a topic? We are finding a lot of overlap with our topics and want to be sure we are differentiating between them.
- When imagining a class of high school students and how we would be

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\* Pseudonyms used for confidentiality.

initially teaching teacher education content, we are concerned that we may be getting into topics that would be covered much later in a course or year. In other words, in approaching complex topics, such as special education, without building up to this topic, leaves a feeling of disjointedness that may transfer into our finished products.

- We want to propose returning to the two initial topics, revising them based on the feedback, and resubmitting them to you by the date you specified. Our goal as a team is to maintain the morale and momentum we have and not to pivot towards new topics just yet. If a new topic is absolutely the route you want to go, we can accommodate that, but would offer the suggestion of starting with something such as “School and Students,” with lessons being built around the characteristics of an effective teacher, who today’s students are, what impacts the schooling of students, etc. Students have all had experience in schools, therefore we could draw on prior knowledge and build a strong foundation for the profession of teaching as an exciting choice for them.
- We noticed innovation comes up a few times in the goals of the work. Without more time for research and discussions with colleagues, it will be very difficult to address the new topics with the type of integrity they deserve, and we are concerned that we might not be developing engaging enough activities.
- We are submitting a rough outline of what we might consider covering in the SPED 101 lesson, if that will continue to be a focus over the next week. It would be helpful to meet in D.C. having spent some time with the initial lessons, and it would also honor the work WiseWire spent in reviewing them.

We addressed the quality of the lesson plans as a technical challenge with a technical solution: more meetings, more directions, clearer directions, revised revision phase, an “exemplar” lesson template, and a well-thought-through checklist to boot. However, the second round of submissions were not much better than the first round of submissions.

I started to think that the substandard lesson plans were a symptom of a much different challenge than I, or anyone else on the Educators Rising team, had anticipated. Maybe the root-cause of why the submissions, now in their second iteration, were less than subpar was based in my misdiagnosis of what I perceived to be the

problem. Dan and I still believed in the skills and knowledge of the SWAT Team; however, we were not seeing the desired outcomes. The skills and knowledge we thought were needed were not producing the foundation for our gold-standard curriculum. In one of our many strategic planning meetings, I distinctly remember Dan saying, “maybe they [the SWAT Team members] just can’t produce an original curriculum.” He went on to say, “They thrive in an advising role, but we underestimated the specific skills needed to be lead writers on publication-ready curricula.” What was obvious to me was that our diagnosis of the challenge was wrong. The challenge was not a technical one. Had I been more thoughtful in my prior diagnosis, I would have seen it. I had not been asking the right questions. I had not been solving for the right problem. At this point in reflection, particularly after Dan uttered those words, there was more than enough evidence pointing to an adaptive challenge (Appendix D). According to Heifetz (2002), “Technical problems, while often challenging, can be solved by applying existing know-how and the organization’s current problem-solving processes” (para. 4). That is exactly how we had tried to solve the curriculum development problem. Adaptive challenges are resistant to the types of technical solutions we tried. They require a much heavier lift or a mindset shift. For example, the SWAT Team had asked for more clarity, more details, etc. They faced an adaptive challenge, but asked for technical solutions. They wanted Dan and me to solve the challenges they incurred while developing original content, while we thought they needed to believe they could do it. The problem was adaptive because the core of what needed to occur lay in understanding that generating new original content was not equivalent to curating various pre-existing content into a new format. Understanding the root-cause of the

situation required a mindset shift, which is a heavy lift for most sentient beings. And since the SWAT Team consisted of leaders who were, by all accounts, considered stellar education practitioners in their home arenas, that mindset shift may have seemed even heavier for them. They needed to see that the solution was not in how many more opportunities we provided them for lesson plan revisions, or how many more checklists we emailed, or exemplars we provided in webinars, or how many one-on-one meetings (aka coaching sessions) I provided—the solution to producing the gold-standard EdRising Academy Curriculum we expected lay within them. However, there was not enough time to engage in the adaptive work needed to allow the team members to think differently about how to create original content versus curating it.

By the time the third iteration of the lesson plans was submitted, which was one day before the second convening, Dan, Ashley (who was now back from her maternity leave), and I, had changed our course of action and strategy for completing the curriculum (Appendix E). Although the work with the SWAT Team ended on December 16, which was the original curriculum completion date, only 40% (33 curriculum topics) had been developed. Until that date, I continued to support the SWAT team; however, the heavy lifting of diving deep into providing feedback through more iterations than had been expected, was now being provided by WiseWire. A stake had been put in the ground about what really mattered. What mattered was ensuring that a top-notch EdRising Academy Curriculum was produced in a very limited amount of time. Neither the SWAT Team nor I had the capacity to get it done. Ultimately, we disbanded the SWAT Team at the end of their contracts. They delivered thirty-two lesson topics, out of the forty-eight they were originally contracted to complete. We hired contractors to

review and revise those lessons to be ready for the start of the 2017-2018 year. We also hired another organization, Arizona K12 Center, to develop content for the remaining lesson topics. In reflection, not having the SWAT Team complete the remaining 60% (70 lesson topics) of the curriculum and extending the curriculum completion date to March was the most logical plan and technical solution to a challenge that we recognized as adaptive (Appendix F). Although I do not know the answer, I also wonder if we could have/should have used a different selection criteria that might have yielded a team with the skills that aligned more with developing original content versus curating content that already existed.

Unfortunately, after the Closers reviewed the last round of lesson plans submitted by the SWAT Team, they determined that many of them needed more extensive revisions than anticipated. Therefore, many of them will not be used for the launching of the curriculum in late spring. The result was that the SWAT Team partially completed what we had originally envisioned. The original curriculum development plan called for one-hundred eighteen topics to be developed into lesson plans, but the initial curriculum launch in spring will have only sixty-two topics developed. The remaining topics will be developed into lesson plans during the summer of 2017 and implemented for the 2017-2018 school year. Working closely with a digital consulting firm, Digital Promise, Dan took on the challenge of revising and finishing the micro-credentials. The micro-credentials were launched the first week of January 2017, after a two-month delay.

Although the SWAT Team did not produce the expected number of lesson plans for the curriculum, it did have initial success while working and collaborating in small

and large teams. For example, during the first convening, the SWAT Team effectively collaborated to produce several key products that were critical in laying the foundation for finishing the lesson plans needed for the curriculum. During those face-to-face small and large group work sessions, the SWAT Team agreed on the foundational topics for the curriculum and a lesson plan template, which would be used to produce the remaining lesson plans for the entire curriculum. While the first convening was very productive, it turned out to be much more difficult to move from conceptualizing the work to producing curriculum. And it was even harder to do that virtually. The SWAT Team experienced less productivity during the virtual time frame when its members worked independently.

We believed the action to not extend the SWAT Team's contract and let them complete the curriculum development was the most logical because we knew leading adaptive work is not quick. We did not have the luxury of time to transition through the adaptive challenge of coaching and leading the SWAT Team from being curriculum curators into curriculum creators. Heifetz espouses that in order to make real progress, eventually leaders must ask themselves, as well as the organizational stakeholders, to face the reality of deeper issues being at the root-cause of a challenge and to accept a solution that requires an unexpected pivot. My new reality caused me to reflect on my original Theory of Action. Did it reflect my new learning (epiphany) about my project? It needed to reflect the new course of action for my project. How could I revise it to reflect an adaptive challenge versus a technical one? I had to revise it because of challenges I encountered during the curriculum development and additional residency



responsibilities unrelated to my strategic project, which forced me to restructure not only my timeline of strategic stages, but revise my Theory of Action, which is reflected below:

**IF I...**

- increase the awareness of the shortage of Blacks becoming teachers;
- increase the awareness of current efforts to diversify teaching workforce;
- create opportunities for Educators Rising to reach more students of color at the secondary level through partnership developments;
- embed myself as a contributing member of the Educators Rising team in its efforts to develop the EdRising Academy Curriculum and Micro-credentials;
- and ensure that Educators Rising successfully completes its pilot of the EdRising Academy Curriculum and Micro-credentials:

**THEN...**

- Educators Rising will be able to effectively support more local Grow-Your-Own teacher preparation programs to effectively develop the next generation of highly skilled and diverse educators.

Ironically, I do find it critical to note here that my pathway to achieving the outcomes of my Theory of Action was not only disrupted due to my project's change in direction, but also due to a leadership decision from my mentor. Phi Delta Kappa needed additional support in its strategic planning as the organization struggled to find a new identity on the education reform landscape. My mentor, during a senior-level meeting, unilaterally increased my residency role saying, "Dwight, I think you should

take the lead with planning our strategic direction meetings.” He wanted me to work more closely with Phi Delta Kappa, not just Educators Rising, and provide more direct support towards the greater Phi Delta Kappa organization. When this realignment of my role and responsibilities occurred, I needed to rethink what success would look like now and how would I know I had achieved success, as opposed to the agreements that were made at the very beginning of my residency. What would inform my decisions now? What would be the implications? Pivoting in additional directions stretched the limits of my bandwidth to an unnerving precipice. Therefore, I wondered had I not been charged with additional tasks, would I have been able to invest more time and energy in supporting the work of the SWAT Team? In reflection, I would like to think I could have done more, but the evidence points to that more time for additional technical support would not have yielded any different results. The SWAT Team required more adaptive support, which required time well outside of the few months originally allotted for this project.

Being unilaterally “repurposed” by the PDK’s CEO into the additional role of strategic planning for PDK allowed me to reflect on the potential impact and positional power I had been forced into. Working solely within the context of Educators Rising, I had little opportunity to participate in conversations around how Phi Delta Kappa would transition into a relevant 21<sup>st</sup>-century organization. I was being forced out of the comfort zone of my initial strategic plan MOU, which in hindsight was not such an indecent proposal after all. Why? Because I could leverage my newly bestowed positional power and make a greater impact than what I had initially planned. I went from having informal authority within the context of Educators Rising to formal authority, granted by the CEO,

within the greater context of PDK. My newly authorized position of authority aligned to the very notion of why I reflected on what I wrote in my Ed.L.D. application nearly three years ago: “On whatever level, be it a local district, state, national, or international, I will willingly continue to forge a path of reshaping how America prepares its most valuable natural resource in the preK-12 education system that effectively educates every child, regardless of his or her socio-economic status, geography, gender, and/or ethnicity.”

In supporting PDK in its quest to reimagine how it can positively impact the academic lives for students by leading their strategic planning meetings and their outcomes, I unexpectedly followed through with my Theory of Action and stayed true to my long-held value of putting students first.

### Implications for Self

***“The most difficult times for many of us are the ones we give ourselves.”***  
***– Pema Chödrön***

I identified the following implications as being the most important for my continuous growth as an effective leader: 1) when operating several degrees removed from students, ensure the focus of my work is driven by finding and keeping the connection to students' learning; 2) navigate organizational ambiguity regardless of my positional power in the organization; 3) reflect on the impact that stereotype threat has on my ability to actualize a more balanced approach to work and life.

**1) When operating several degrees removed from students, ensure the focus of my work is driven by finding and keeping the connection to students' learning.**

Prior to starting my residency, I was convinced that I knew how to remain focused on positive outcomes for students, regardless of the situation. For example, in previous roles, as I navigated the small and large P of politics, overcame “start-up” ambiguity, and forged community partnerships between oppositional forces, I had learned to stay true to my value that positive outcomes for students must always come first. Staying focused on student outcomes is at the core of who I am as a practitioner. That value of mine did not change as I dove deeper into my residency. However, it was challenged, or at the very least, became clouded, due to the climate of working within a sub-organizational structure. To be clear, the challenge was not simply due to the existence of this sub-organizational structure. The challenge was rooted in the uncertainty of the umbrella organization, PDK, struggling with identifying a clearly articulated vision and mission, while the sub-organization, Educators Rising, precariously and boldly forged ahead with its well-developed strategic plan. Under those

conditions, as the Strategic Initiatives Resident, I was fully engaged in leading the support for the SWAT Team; however, as the need for additional support for PDK's work intensified, PDK's CEO tapped me as that additional support. More specifically, he needed me to take the lead with organizing the strategic planning meetings for the organization.

During this time, I learned the importance of staying focused on my core value of keeping students first, although I was several degrees removed from students. With my additional focus to support PDK's work in evolving into a more relevant educational organization and achieving a clearly defined core purpose, along with my additional residency obligations, it was relatively easy for me to lose sight of students in the work I perceived, at the time, as nebulous and disconnected from students. In reflection, I wonder if I should have viewed my additional scope of work as having a trickle-down effect: I was supporting the organization in its goal of providing focused, quality professional development to district leaders and teachers, which in turn would help to develop teachers, and ultimately improve student learning outcomes. I asked this question and forced myself to reflect on how I might navigate similar situations in the future. Although the work, at times, might not feel linked to student outcomes, I must force myself to not only stay vigilant in honoring my values of keeping students first, but to think more broadly about how tasks, even at the thirty-five thousand feet level, can and do ultimately impact student learning.

## **2) Navigate organizational ambiguity regardless of my positional power in the organization.**

I gained an informed perspective about organizational complexity when an organization within an organization exists, and the challenges of navigating within those layers, which was paramount in my understanding of how I could best support the entire organization. Educators Rising existed as a nearly self-contained organization that operated within the context of PDK's greater organizational structure as its umbrella or parent organization. When my scope of responsibilities evolved into working more directly with PDK, I wrestled with how to focus my work to simultaneously support both organizations in meaningful ways. I understood how to support Educators Rising with its curriculum development. The organization had a clearly stated vision, mission, and strategic plan. However, since PDK was in the process of redefining itself, it had yet to land on an agreed upon vision and mission. Working within that context forced me to reflect on that ambiguity, and the reality is that I was not uncomfortable working within that space. Proof of this is when I, prior to entering the Ed.L.D. program, had thrived in the ambiguity of starting a new charter management organization. However, within PDK's context, I did feel a sense of discomfort. I was uncomfortable with not possessing the positional power and authority to expeditiously mitigate that ambiguity. That reality forced me, as a temporary resident, to learn how to navigate the intra-organizational complexity, in a way that allowed for both the parent and the sub-organizations to coexist as beneficiaries of each other's organizational efforts.

I tried to make sense of the situation by toggling between PDK and Educators Rising. This strategic maneuvering was essential because with Educators Rising's

forward march to fulfill its goals through a series of strategically planned initiatives fueled by sufficient financial support from PDK, it could serve as a proof-point of how PDK is evolving into a viable 21<sup>st</sup>-century educational organization. I supported Educators Rising by ensuring its leadership leveraged its investment in me in meaningful ways after my leadership with the SWAT Team ended. I learned that leveraging my perspective and experience as a supplementary support for PDK's senior leadership team enabled the organization to explore moving more closely towards putting a stake in the ground and reaching an agreed upon and well-articulated vision and mission for PDK, which are the cornerstones of any highly functioning organization. Ultimately, a key learning for me from my strategic project was learning how to navigate organizational ambiguity regardless of my positional power, and realizing that I can continue to be effective with varying degrees of power.

### **3) Reflect on the impact that stereotype threat has on my ability to actualize a more balanced approach to work and life.**

My residency forced me to strive harder at pushing towards my "growth edge," while also trying to succeed at balancing work demands. Like many of my contemporaries, in my work experiences prior to my residency, I found myself feverishly racing to always do more (aka achieve more). Consciously, or not, I became well-acclimated to the incessant demands of that dreadful hedonic treadmill of life: achieving my goals brought me happiness, but when that happiness dissipated, I aimed my goals higher to achieve even greater happiness. By the time I transitioned into my residency, I precariously teetered on that hedonic treadmill, but that reality did not prevent me from continuing an unsustainable work pace. For example, when the SWAT Team worked

virtually, I communicated to them that they could reach out to me via email, text, and phone whenever they needed additional support. Often, many of them followed-up on my invitation at varying times of the day, night, and weekends. My availability to the team was in addition to my scheduled weekly conference calls with the SWAT Team leaders. I wondered why I had made myself so readily available, as this had not allowed me to achieve greater work-life balance, and I realized that it had not helped produce the desired product either.

In the midst of the demands of juggling my often Murphy's Law-ridden life, with all its sometimes-bewildering twists and turns, residency requirements, capstone research and writing, and exhausting post-Ed.L.D. program career-planning strategy conversations and continuous interviewing, I realized an idea long-buried in my subconscious: I could not maintain such a perpetual race to "prove." I had to be more deliberate in actualizing what I have been attempting to do for years.

Decrying the need to make time in my daily life for self, family, and friends on a continuous basis was not a new theme for me. Actually, it had become a rather tired refrain with inconsequential results. What was I trying to prove and to whom? What did I fear? The root-cause of my inability to actualize my growth edge, as it relates to achieving a more balanced approach to work and life, nests itself deep within my reality of living in the fear of unrelenting stereotype threats. Like countless situations in my life, I was the only Black man in the room during my residency interview with Educators Rising. Being the only Black man in the room has never been uncomfortable for me. However, my well-conditioned goal to avoid perpetuating the countless negative stereotypes about Black men bleed out, at varying levels of consciousness, in many



aspects of my life. For example, I am usually the first to arrive at work. I work longer hours than most others in my organization. Running late usually does not happen. I complete all assignments and excel academically. The list could go on. We all know a plethora of negative stereotypes that exists about Black men. Avoiding being perceived as any negative stereotype undergirds why balancing my work and life continued to elude my grasp.

From this experience, I realized how deeply and inextricably linked my identity is to my work ethic and how I want to be perceived—and I realized how uncomfortable I felt when coming to this understanding. I felt so uncomfortable that it rendered me incapable of a quicker root-cause analysis of the challenges we faced during the curriculum development. I realized that I would not have been able to “solve” the challenges the SWAT Team faced even if I had worked twenty more hours per week. I had approached the curriculum development task as a technical one. However, it needed an adaptive solution for not only the SWAT Team, but for me as well. Ultimately, I learned how to face navigating the tension I feel when striving to achieve greater work-life balance by setting clear boundaries, while also embracing work demands. Working more hours does not equate to greater number or quality of work products. I learned the value of, “work smarter, not harder.”

## Implications for Site

As I reflect on my analysis, evidence, and overall residency experience with Educators Rising, I suggest the following recommendations: 1) The leadership of Phi Delta Kappa and Educators Rising must focus on continuing to develop a culture of psychological safety; 2) Educators Rising must develop a public narrative about potential impact by promoting its curriculum and micro-credentials as the gold-standard for aspiring educators; 3) Educators Rising must stay the course to launch products and scale them; 4) PDK and Educators Rising should develop a culture of continuous strategic learning and execution.

### **1) The leadership of Phi Delta Kappa and Educators Rising must focus on continuing to develop a culture of psychological safety.**

As my description, evidence, and analysis sections illustrated, continued support (e.g., financial agreements and follow-through) from Phi Delta Kappa, as the parent organization for Educators Rising, is critical for the success of not only Educators Rising, but also PDK. The legitimacy and support built through public perceptions of Educators Rising can hold success for PDK. Both leaders of PDK and Educators Rising should focus on growing a culture of psychological safety for all employees. A culture of psychological safety is one built on trust, where tough, authentic, and transparent conversations are valued, which could yield win-win outcomes for the entire organization. For example, Educators Rising effectively collaborates with Phi Delta Kappa to ensure the development of organizational capacity to support the EdRising Academy implementation.

The current reality is that PDK is diligently striving to reestablish itself. More correctly stated, PDK is in the process of rethinking its value-add to the education sector. Since Educators Rising is able to firmly maintain its path to providing states, districts, and local school communities the much-desired structures to grow-their-own teachers, PDK should continue to embrace Educators Rising's development of potential products and their implementation. PDK should continue to give Educators Rising room to innovate and grow while also incorporating them into the new overall strategy, which would allow Educators Rising to leverage PDK for what it is trying to do rather than separating itself.

**2) Educators Rising must develop a public narrative about potential impact by promoting its curriculum and micro-credentials as the gold-standard for aspiring educators.**

Educators Rising has looked to reimagine how talented aspiring educators, particularly those of color, are taking their first steps into the world of teaching. The next step is to develop a public narrative about its potential impact. It must strategically communicate to a broad audience (e.g., institutions of higher education, parents, students) how it is becoming an entry point on the pathway for a well-trained and more diverse teacher workforce to effectively pursue postsecondary studies in education, and that narrative should be distinct and clear for different stakeholder/audiences.

For example, a narrative for students would articulate how they would have an opportunity to explore teaching while in high school, and potentially receive college-level credit. The narrative for schools, districts, and states would demonstrate how teachers who want to become leaders, while remaining in the classroom, can do so by becoming

teacher leaders within the EdRising Academy. The additional narrative for teachers would include how, as EdRising Academy teacher leaders, they would have a direct impact on guiding the next generation of aspiring teachers onto a concrete and coherent pathway into the education workforce. For parents, the narrative would highlight the opportunity of incentivizing students to return to their community as home-grown teachers.

An additional narrative would speak to increasing teacher diversity. My residency work surfaced current national dialogue advocating for students of color in our public schools to have equitable access to qualified teachers who reflect their degree of diversity. This is an opportunity for Educators Rising to leverage its ever-expanding network of more than twenty-nine thousand students. Educators Rising's student population is representative of the diversity of our public schools. As of spring of 2017, more than 51% of students in the Educators Rising network are students of color. Just as Google partnered with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to increase diversity in the IT workforce, Educators Rising should develop a narrative explicitly highlighting its active 51% membership of students of color, and how that partnership can be an additional nationwide effort to increase diversity of the public school teacher workforce. Furthermore, Educators Rising should highlight to HBCUs, as well as non-HBCUs, how its curriculum can help raise cultural awareness, as it was developed with an intentional focus on cultural awareness and competency.

Additionally, as Educators Rising marches towards its pilot of the EdRising Academy Curriculum, it can begin to develop a public narrative of how it is providing access to an increasing population of students of color as a gold-standard pathway for

them to become teachers. Educators Rising must promote the EdRising Academy Curriculum as a gold-standard for rising educators because the curriculum is developed from research-backed practices of what aspiring teachers should know and be able to do when they enter the teaching profession. Those evidence-based practices were distilled by a national convening of teacher educators representing current and retired K-12 and higher education practitioners, into seven foundational standards for how rising educators should engage in developing the skills and knowledge on their pathway to becoming accomplished teachers. The narrative here is that aspiring educators can learn the practice through a foundation built on standards developed by practitioners for practitioners.

### **3) Educators Rising must stay the course to launch products and scale them.**

By continuing to fully support the development of the EdRising Academy, which includes the Educators Rising Virtual Campus, Standards-based Curriculum, Micro-credentials, and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standard teacher training videos, Educators Rising can leverage these products to provide technical and adaptive support to states, districts, and local schools. By participating in those products, teachers and rising educators will be able to experience a culture of support and collaboration. Ultimately, over time, an increased awareness, appreciation, and respect will assist Educators Rising in increasing its value-add to the world of education practitioners. In short, with Phi Delta Kappa's support, Educators Rising can demonstrate its value-add to the public, which will have long-term positive impact on the entire organization's sustainability. Stay this course and scale it.

**4) PDK and Educators Rising should develop a culture of continuous strategic learning and execution.**

Phi Delta Kappa should dedicate a full-time staff person to continue my strategic planning work before I transition out of my residency. The organization would benefit by having another Ed.L.D. resident who would pick up the baton of not only strategic planning, but also help transition the organization into becoming an organization of continuous learning and execution. Each strategic meeting should incorporate an opportunity for the organization to engage in continuous learning opportunities to experience frameworks and tools to help the overall organizational culture. For example, during my residency, I introduced the Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) Feedback model. The SBI model is a tool that allows participants to objectively provide feedback by describing the situation, behavior, and impact to others in a way that promotes avoiding assumptions. Incorporating this tool could help to support developing the psychological safety I recommended earlier for the site.

PDK has spent tens of thousands of dollars over the past few years for consulting firms to create its strategic plan. Before the current CEO arrived, PDK spent over \$100,000 on a strategic planning consulting firm. However, three years later, the recommendations have yet to come into fruition because a full-time employee has not been hired for the strategic planning work to transition into full implementation through execution. If PDK is not able to secure an Ed.L.D. resident, then a full-time employee should be hired or contracted as a 1099 employee to ensure the organizational strategic planning and implementation work continues, and eventually evolves the organization into one of continuous learning and growth.

## Implications for Sector

***“We wanted to create a gold-standard curriculum that served as a coherent on-ramp into rigorous, comprehensive teacher preparation programs.”***  
***– Dan Brown, Co-Director, Educators Rising***

When I reflect on my analysis, evidence, and experience during my residency, it suggests that the EdRising Academy Curriculum and Micro-credentials, if implemented with fidelity, could have major implications for the greater education sector. I identify three of those key implications as the following: 1) Diversifying the teacher workforce through Grow-Your-Own initiatives; 2) Accessing untapped leadership potential among teachers and supporting them; 3) Using a gold-standard curriculum for aspiring educators.

### **1) Diversifying the teacher workforce through Grow-Your-Own initiatives**

The need for diversity in the teacher workforce in communities varies as greatly as our nation is diverse. Because of this variation, communities should have the opportunity to attract, develop, and support teachers based upon their local context. With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, which allows states to support and grow local innovations, now is a perfect time for models like Educators Rising, which can innovatively start aspiring educators on a pathway to teaching through a GYO initiative. A model like the Educators Rising’s GYO does not necessarily have to start in high school to grow teachers from communities. They could start even earlier—at the middle-school level. However, the Educators Rising model offers one viable way for those communities to access programs or “Academies” that can be tailored to grow-their-own and meet specific needs of their communities.

When communities become aware of and gain access to a model like the EdRising Academy, they could start more aspiring educators, particularly 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, on the pathway to becoming great teachers. Teachers who teach in and around the communities where they lived have an increased understanding of the students who live there. Those home-grown teachers have increased measurable positive impact on student learning outcomes. Since at least 60% of teachers eventually teach within twenty miles of where they attended high school, the model Educators Rising is offering could be a game changer for not only communities, but the educational sector as a whole, with how we personalize teacher preparation programs throughout the country. Grow-Your-Own models represent how to support local communities by providing them with a gold-standard early teacher preparation program so that those local communities do not have to continue figuring out how to create and implement their own curriculum.

## **2) Accessing untapped leadership potential among teachers and supporting them**

Teacher attrition rates continue to plague our nation's public education system. This reality can be attributed to teachers feeling dissatisfied with their previous teaching position because they did not have access to increased teacher-leadership opportunities that supported them leading from the classroom. School, district, and state administrators should provide opportunities where the most dynamic and impactful teachers can remain in the classroom as teacher leaders, but have a meaningful impact outside the classroom as well. For example, during the course of developing the EdRising Academy Curriculum, many shared they felt a sense of pride in knowing they were not just teaching, but involved in creating a coherent pathway to produce the next



generation of highly prepared and motivated educators. When teachers feel appreciated and valued for their work, a tremendous body of research shows that their increased levels of job satisfaction can lead to greater percentages of those educators remaining in their positions. The ripple effect can lead to a greater sense of being valued, which eventually translates into increased appreciation and respect for teachers. The notion of being valued and appreciated, and being monetarily rewarded, as a teacher leader, like our SWAT Team model, creates an elevated culture of respectability internally and externally.

Opportunities like the EdRising Academy Curriculum development project allowed dynamic teachers to expand their expertise outside the reach of their daily classrooms, which afforded them a chance to experience leadership responsibility while remaining classroom teachers. School, district, and state administrators can promote teacher leadership opportunity models like the EdRising Academy to highlight more opportunities. However, while administrators are realizing that there is still much untapped potential among teachers for leadership, they also need to realize, as we learned during the curriculum development, that more support, structure, and time to really tap into that expertise is also needed.

### **3) Using a gold-standard curriculum for aspiring educators**

Study results about first-year teachers continuously illustrate that a significant percent of them felt inadequately prepared after entering the classroom, and some of this reality can be attributed to the wide variations of teacher preparation programs seen throughout the country. A model like the EdRising Academy Curriculum offers the wider

education sector an opportunity to scale programs that would provide general guidelines for starting aspiring educators on their pathway to teaching.

In the Educators Rising model, the curriculum was developed for teachers by teachers. They aligned the curriculum with the standards of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which was used as a foundation for what rising educators (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade high school students) need and should know as they take their first steps on their pathway to entering the teaching profession. However, the EdRising Academy Curriculum is not like other teacher prep programs for two primary reasons: 1) There is no nationally recognized rising educator program for high school students; 2) The EdRising Curriculum is not linear like most postsecondary teacher-prep programs. Therefore, teacher leader implementers of programs like the EdRising Academy have the autonomy to select specific topics to meet the needs of their community and students. As a safeguard to avoid variability and ensure rising educators are exposed to essential foundational teaching pedagogy, the curriculum identifies several “must do” or required courses (clinical and non-clinical). Highlighting the EdRising Academy Curriculum is the reality that all of its topics are rooted in effectively preparing them for their first day as a teacher by providing rising educators with a background of essential teaching topics, as well as subject-specific content. Additionally, the scaling of micro-credentials can become a valid and reliable performance-based assessment that can be an opportunity for students to engage in not only building skills, but highlighting mastery in those skills starting at the secondary level. Moreover, there should be ongoing studies to determine if a model like the EdRising Academy Curriculum is indeed a gold-standard. When the results on the

effectiveness of the curriculum begins to show improved learning outcomes for students and teachers indicate a greater sense of being effectively prepared to enter the field, they will become advocates for scaling teacher preparation programs that require rigor and relevance.

## Conclusion

I chose to conduct my residency at Educators Rising/Phi Delta Kappa because teachers matter, and how well they are prepared to enter the classroom matters, too. During my past experiences as a teacher, principal, and Chief Academic Officer, I have seen the adverse effects on students when their teachers are not well-prepared to face and overcome the challenges of being an educator, especially one in our diverse 21<sup>st</sup>-century public classrooms. Over half of the 50 million students in public schools are students of color; however, only 20% of the education workforce in those public schools are teachers of color. My research illustrated the negative effect this dynamic could have on students, especially Black male students. It is because of this reality that I deeply care about getting more effective teachers and more teachers of color working with students, and keeping them in the profession over the long term.

While many organizations are approaching questions of quality, retention, and diversity in the workforce in a number of different ways, Educators Rising has a somewhat unique approach, which is to help communities grow-their-own teachers that will reflect the diversity represented in those communities. Educators Rising endeavors to support GYO initiatives by working with high school students (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders) and doing early work preparing them to be educators. This work also coincides with growing work nationally about helping students be both college and career ready.

I thought my project would be fairly straightforward: get top-notch teacher leaders from around the country to design a gold-standard curriculum for high school students, and develop micro-credentials to help students demonstrate mastery. However, my strategic project turned out to be more complicated than I had anticipated. Given the

fast timeline on which we were working and the fact that we were asking educators to do a collaborative task, with most of the collaboration occurring virtually, it was different than what they were prepared to do, and it turned out to be harder than I expected. Additionally, this project illustrated the critical need for education leaders to reflect on how to best tap into teachers' expertise and what the role of external organizations can be in convening teachers and generating products based on their expertise.

Initially, I treated my strategic project like a technical challenge, until I realized that this approach was not yielding the desired outcomes. I eventually realized that it was more of an adaptive task. Therefore, I, along with everyone else involved with this project, had to adjust accordingly, while still moving the work forward on a tight timeline.

The micro-credentials are now out in the world, and the curriculum supporting them is scheduled for release by early spring 2017. They will be available to pilot for select high school students around the country. They will become available for all interested students for the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

Over time, we will see whether this pathway for enlisting and supporting aspiring educators makes a difference in communities and classrooms, thus leading to a more diverse, skillful, and sustainable workforce. Through a collective effort with all stakeholders, I deeply believe the education sector can accomplish the goal of providing every student, regardless of his or her socio-economic status, geography, gender, and/or race the equitable education they each deserve.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Educators Rising Standards Overview

## OVERVIEW OF EDUCATORS RISING STANDARDS



#### **Standard I: Understanding the Profession**

*Rising educators learn about the profession to explore career opportunities, develop skills they need, and make informed decisions about pathways to accomplished teaching.*



#### **Standard II: Learning About Students**

*Rising educators learn about themselves and their students for the purpose of building relationships and supporting student development.*



#### **Standard III: Building Content Knowledge**

*Rising educators learn how to build content knowledge for the purpose of creating relevant learning opportunities for their students.*



#### **Standard IV: Engaging in Responsive Planning**

*Rising educators learn how to respond to students' needs through thoughtful planning.*



#### **Standard V: Implementing Instruction**

*Rising educators learn effective instructional strategies to engage students and promote learning.*



#### **Standard VI: Using Assessments and Data**

*Rising educators learn to use assessments and interpret data for the purpose of making decisions that will advance teaching and learning.*



#### **Standard VII: Engaging in Reflective Practice**

*Rising educators learn how reflective practice enables them to advance student learning and grow professionally.*

## **Appendix B: 2017 Educators Rising Conference Competitive Events and Awards Secondary Level**

- Children's Literature K-3
- Children's Literature Pre-K
- Creative Lecture (TED Talk)
- Educators Rising Leadership Award
- Educators Rising Moment
- Ethical Dilemma
- Exploring Education Administration Careers
- Exploring Non-Core Subject Teaching Careers
- Exploring Support Services Careers
- Impromptu Lesson
- Impromptu Speaking
- Inside Our Schools Presentation
- Job Interview
- Lesson Planning & Delivery – Arts
- Lesson Planning & Delivery – Career & Technical Education
- Lesson Planning & Delivery – Humanities
- Lesson Planning & Delivery – STEM
- Public Speaking
- Researching Learning Challenges

### **Postsecondary Level**

- Children's Literature
- Creative Lecture (TED Talk)
- Lesson Planning & Delivery

## Appendix C: Teachers' Views on the Importance of Various Skills and Characteristics to Being a Great Teacher

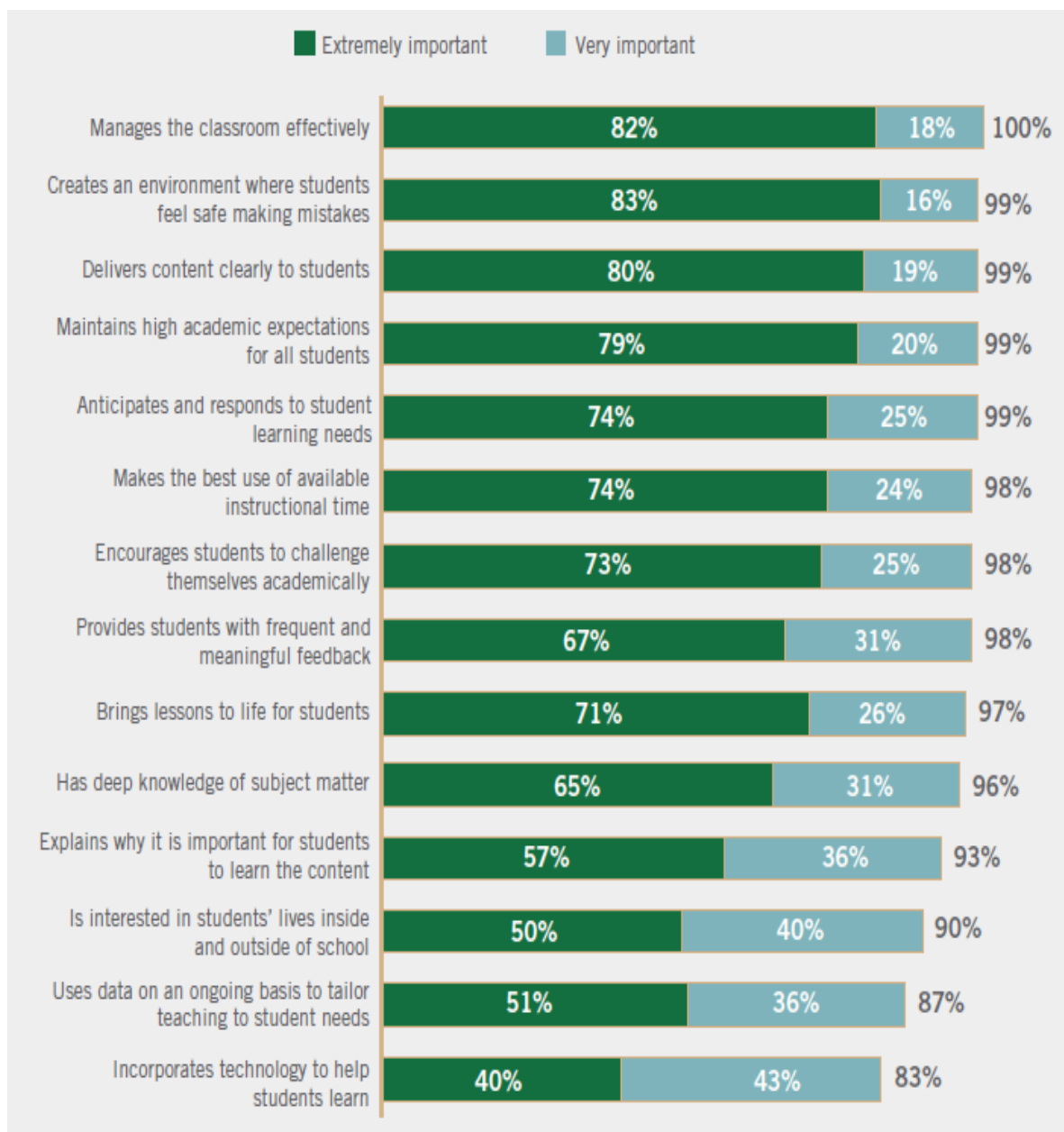


Chart from:

<http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/PrimarySources3rdEditionWithAppendix.pdf>

## Appendix D: Suggested Partnership Development Logic Model - Educators Rising

### Partnership Development - Logic Model

#### Goal:

- Develop blueprint, based upon researched best-practices, for connecting Educators Rising with external partnerships (e.g. Logic Model and Partnership Pathway Flowchart)
  - Signed MOUs with...
    - Districts/States (LEA/SEA)
    - IHE
    - Local Schools



INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	ACTIVITIES	PARTICIPANTS	SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
<i>In order for Educators Rising to achieve its partnership development goals, the following are needed:</i>  Dedicated staff to support partnership development strategy  Valid & Reliable research on partnership development  Alignment of partnership development with current Educators Rising Logic Models for program	<i>Accomplishing the following activities will result in the following measurable deliverables:</i>  Understand how current partnerships/MOUs were forged  Extrapolate “usable” or best-practices used to form current partnerships/MOUs  Review current MOUs  Survey of current MOU holders	<i>Who will participate with achieving desired outcomes?:</i>  LEAs & SEAs  Reps from current MOU holders  Teacher Leaders  Rising Educators  Educators Rising rep  Current Educator Rising Partners	<i>What are the short-term results:</i>  Understanding of what steps to take to develop partnerships  Knowledge of needs for stakeholders  partnership develop from multiple perspectives (e.g. LEAs/SEAs, IHE, & schools)	<i>What are the long-term results:</i>  Partnership Pathway Flowchart  Creation of partnership Readiness checklist (to assess value for seeking certain partnerships)  Partnership toolkit	<i>What are the ultimate impact(s):</i>  Growth of teacher pipeline at H.S. level, with emphasis on students of color  Sustaining forged partnerships  Continuous revenue for Educators Rising from products  Full Implementation of EdRising products
			OUTCOME MEASURES		
			Increase in number of expressed interest in partnerships	Increase of students and T.L. accessing EdRising Academy  Increase of students earning MCs	Increase number of partnerships with Signed MOUs

## Appendix E: EdRising Academy Curriculum Checklist

As you're developing and refining your lessons, consider the following questions. Aim for a "yes" response to most or all higher-level questions, and the ability to provide details and evidence for all sub-level questions.

### General

- Is the content high-interest, engaging, and inspiring for pre-pre-service teachers?
  - How so?
- Is the content innovative?
  - How so?
- Will the content meaningfully prepare students to meet higher education expectations in teacher preparation programs?
  - How so?
- Is the content supported by a body of reliable and valid research and research-backed best practices?
  - How so?
- Is adequate support and guidance provided for teachers delivering the lesson?
  - How so?
- Does the lesson allow for flexibility and customization by teachers?
  - How so?
- Is content presented in a variety of ways to engage all learners?
  - How so?
- Are students invited to express themselves in a variety of ways?
  - How so?

### Specific

- Is the content precisely aligned to one or more Educators Rising standards?
  - How so?
- Is one or more of the cross-cutting themes woven into the lesson, in implicit or explicit ways?
  - How so?



## Appendix F: Adaptive Leadership Mode of Operating

<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Mode of Operating</b>	
	<b>Managing</b>	<b>Leading</b>
	<b>Situation</b>	
	<b>Technical</b>	<b>Adaptive</b>
Direction	Define problems and solutions	Identify adaptive challenges and frame the key questions and issues
Protection	Shield the organization from external threat	Let the organization feel external threats within a productive range of distress
Order:	Restore order	Regulate disequilibrium -- within a productive range
• Orientation	Clarify roles and responsibilities	Disorient current roles and resist pressure to orient people to new roles too quickly
• Managing Conflict	Reduce conflict	Surface and use conflict productively
• Shaping Norms	Maintain current norms	Challenge unproductive norms or let them be challenged

Chart adapted from Ronald A. Heifetz & Donald L. Laurie, "The Work of Leadership," Harvard Business Review, January-February 1997

## Appendix G: How SWAT Team Plans were Modified

After reading all of the lesson plans and MCs, here's a quick overview of our thoughts and wonderings for you to consider when you're developing the lesson plan exemplars:

For each granular topic, we'll cover it in 3 versions. Identify the instructional time frame for each version from the following options ([see below for more details](#)).

- 1 day ("Small")
- 2-3 day ("Medium")
- 3-5 day ("Large")

We recommend starting by conceptualizing the "Large" plan ("How would you cover this material if you could go really deep and spend a lot of time on it?") and then think about stripping it down

More concretely, as you're developing and refining your lessons, consider the following questions. Aim for a "yes" response to most or all higher-level questions, and the ability to provide details and evidence for all sub-level questions.

### General

1. Is the content high-interest, engaging, and inspiring for pre-pre-service teachers? How so?
2. Is the content innovative? How so?
3. Will the content meaningfully prepare students to meet higher education expectations in teacher preparation programs? How so?
4. Is the content supported by a body of valid and reliable research and research-backed best practices? How so?
5. Is adequate support and guidance provided for teachers delivering the lesson? How so?
6. Does the lesson allow for flexibility and customization by teachers? How so?
7. Is content presented in a variety of ways to engage all learners? How so?
8. Are students invited to express themselves in a variety of ways? How so?

### Specific

1. Is the content precisely aligned to one or more Educators Rising standards? How so?
2. Is one or more of the cross-cutting themes woven into the lesson, in implicit or explicit ways? How so?
3. Is the necessary context provided for resources students are asked to read, view, listen to, and/or analyze (e.g. its limitations, any inherent biases, its position within the larger body of research on the particular topic, including if a larger body of research does not yet exist or points to conflicting conclusions, etc.) How so?
4. Are the learning objectives clear and measurable? How so?
5. Are formative, summative, and other types of assessment aligned to the learning objectives? How so?

6. Does the content of the lesson support the learning objectives and assessment?  
How so?
7. How are students being engaged in meaningful ways? How is it innovative?
8. What opportunities are there for students to engage in writing (before, during, and/or after the lesson)?
9. When do students have a chance to reflect on their learning?
10. How can technology be integrated meaningfully into the lesson?
11. How well do the quick formative assessments (e.g. exit tickets) align with the stated lesson objectives?

### For Micro-credential Teams:

The Method Components section could be clearer on what are the research-backed non-negotiable components of a teaching method/research method v. what is a suggested implementation or best practice or guiding question

- The flow we're looking for in Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 can be summarized as:  
     Part 1: Context  
     Part 2: Artifacts demonstrating what the learner did  
     Part 3: Reflection

In the rubrics, we want to incentivize excellence. The next draft of the rubrics can be more focused on quality/caliber of the work and less on compliance or completion of the requirements— although there is still a place for that.

### For Curriculum Teams - New Assignment:

We're shifting from seeking 5 granular lessons for each broad topic to simply selecting granular topics and for each one developing large (3-5 day), medium (2-3 day), and small (1 day) instructional plans.

#### **Your group will have 2 topics.**

- Topic #1: Understanding the Role of Stakeholders in Supporting Students  
(Your group's lessons on this had some nice ideas.)
- Topic #2: Special Education 101

(PEEPPS' work on the Special Education Law, IEPs, etc. lesson had good industry-approved texts as a base.)

#### **For each of these, your team will create the following:**

- **at least one large (3-5 day),**
- **one medium (2-3 day),**
- **and one small (1 day) plan.**

It's a great idea as was mentioned in the call to start by thinking about the large plan—the deep dive! Then the medium and small could be pared-back versions of the comprehensive exploration you develop for the large plan.

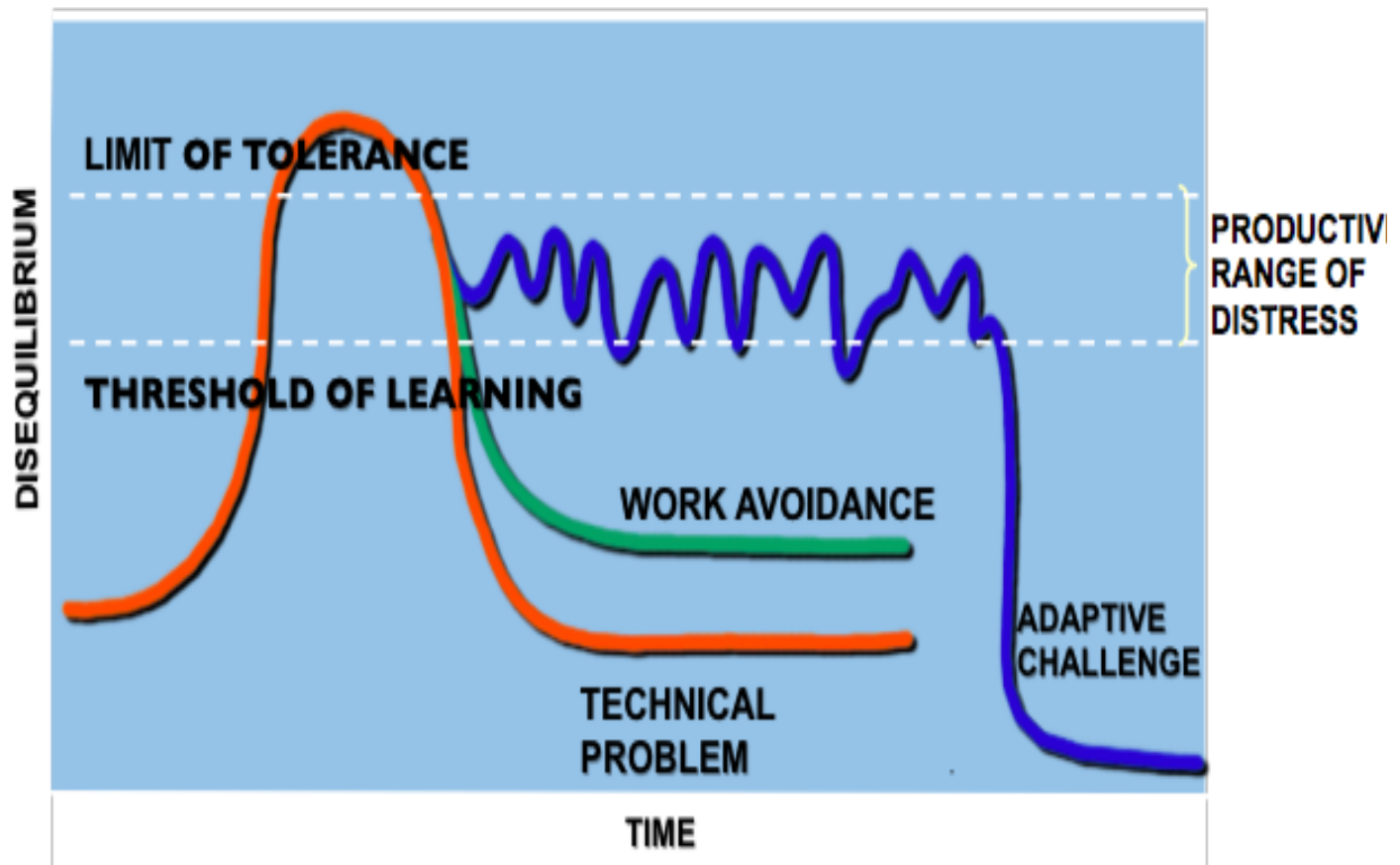
Remember the helping teenage, rising educators grapple with the “**why**” of these concepts is essential.

### NEW TIMELINE:

New materials due to Educators Rising & WiseWire by end of day on Wed. Sep. 14. This will be a grand total of 6 plans (large, medium, and small for 2 topics).

(The jigsaw feedback plan with other groups is cancelled.)

Please reach out with any questions, and great work by the team!

**Appendix H: Adaptive Leadership**

Caption from Heifetz, Ronald A. and Marty Linsky. Leadership on the Line, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2002, pg. 108